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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Council To Meet in Cairo 30 Mar

Secretary General Comments

NC2003141591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1315 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Mr. As'ad al-As'ad, acting secretary general of the Arab League, has reported that the Arab League secretariat has received written acceptances from 14 Arab countries and oral acceptances from three to participate in the Arab League Council's ordinary session to be held on 30 March in Cairo.

Mr. As'ad al-As'ad said he hoped that all Arab countries would participate in the meeting to discuss and exchange views on the new stage of confronting the challenges the Arab nation is being faced with.

In a statement today after meeting with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, Mr. As'ad al-As'ad said that his meeting with Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid was very beneficial. He added that it is important to confer and coordinate stands regarding the topics the Arab League Council will discuss. Mr. As'ad al-As'ad had earlier received Mr. Mohamed Brahim, the Algerian ambassador in Cairo, who informed him that Algeria would be attenting the Arab League meeting.

16 States Confirm Attendence

NC2103141091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1234 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—As'ad al-As'ad, Arab League acting secretary general, has announced that 16 Arab countries have sent confirmation in writing to the Arab League General Secretariat that they will attend the meetings of the Arab League ordinary session scheduled to convene at the Arab League's permanent headquarters in Cairo on 30 March. At a news conference at Arab League headquarters today, he said: We are waiting for the other Arab countries to confirm their attendance. He noted that any country invited to attend the meetings can participate, even if it has not sent prior confirmation to the General Secretariat. He said that the countries that have agreed to attend the meetings are Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Somalia, Djibouti, Palestine, Morocco, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, and the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries. [passage omitted]

League 46th Anniversary Statement

NC2103192491 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1425 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—Acting Arab League Secretary General As'ad al-As'ad has called on all the Arab countries to work together to heal the rift in Arab ranks and restore the vitality of pan-Arab solidarity and collective Arab action by adhering to the Arab League Charter, the Arab joint defense pact, economic cooperation agreements, and other Arab charters.

In a statement issued on the occasion of the Arab League's 46th anniversary, al-As'ad asserted that although the Arab homeland's cruel ordeal has ended and Kuwait has regained its independence and sovereignty, the Arab nation still has tremendous responsibilities in confronting all challenges and dangers.

He added that foremost among those challenges is the Palestinian issue, which is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict; the liberation of all occupied Arab territories; and establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with UN resolutions.

He added that these tremendous responsibilities can be met only with the cohesion of all the Arab countries.

The acting Arab League secretary general pointed out that the major events experienced by the Arab nation call for profound thought and careful planning in order to develop the Arab League Charter in a way that will achieve a qualitative change in its activity, regulations, and mechanisms and lay the foundations and rules capable of resolving all differences and disputes peacefully. He said such a change will enhance its ability to safeguard pan-Arab security collectively and individually and promote pan-Arab action within the league's framework toward broad new horizons in a developed world based on large blocs and on economic, scientific, and technological power.

Related to this, he noted that all the Arab countries agree that the Arab League must remain the pan-Arab institution that expresses the Arab unity of affiliation and destiny and that embodies the Arab nation's aspirations.

He said that the Arab countries are urged to strengthen the collective Arab family in a way that will achieve the nation's aspirations within the framework of the League's Charter, rules, and objectives. He asserted that this is the sole and certain way to establish a solid Arab security structure that is made and protected by the nation's will and its indigenous capabilities.

As'ad al-As'ad added that only such pan-Arab security will guarantee the security of every Arab country and provide the necessary requirements for collective and individual Arab economic development.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Sends Support Message to Saddam Husayn

LD2103113591 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1602 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The brother leader, President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], has sent, on the occasion of the great month of Ramadan, a message of support to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, in which he expresses the hope that

Iraq will surmount the effects and difficulties of the war of aggression and will overcome all the conspiracies being hatched against it.

Mistreatment of Kuwait's Palestinians Reported

PNC Speaker Comments

NC2103011591 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Mar 91 p 6

[Text] Amman—Hani al-Duwayk writes: The sons of the Jordanian and Palestinian communities in Kuwait are being subjected to ill-treatment and harassment. These acts are a link in the chain of practices against the Palestinian people everywhere.

During meetings with Palestinian officials, Palestine National Council [PNC] Speaker His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih expressed the PLO's concern about the harm inflicted on the sons of the Palestinian community in Kuwait. He said this runs counter to the basic feelings of the Arab and Islamic brotherhood. He stressed the need to give serious consideration to this issue to help the Palestinian people and allow them to live.

Shaykh al-Sa'ih said that the Palestinian people's tragedy in Kuwait is serious and is causing grave harm to them, although they are peaceful people and want to return to their homeland. The Palestinian people value their ties with all Arab countries.

The PNC speaker added: We are extremely concerned about this tragedy and hope that the situation will be rectified and that no false accusations will be leveled against our people that might inflict harm on them. He said: When a person violates the law of a country, he alone should stand trial—the entire people should not be threatened by the sword of Damocles. This will have a serious effect on Palestinian-Arab relations. I urge the amir of Kuwait to treat this issue with wisdom and to prevent any harm to our people.

The PNC speaker expressed fears that, if the attacks continue on the sons of the Jordanian and Palestinian communities, our people might take steps to safeguard their rights, adding: We are not threatening anyone. We want our people to enjoy their rights so they will not be compelled to pursue any course to safeguard their existence and rights.

Al-Sa'ih noted that the PLO is continuing exchanges with all international circles to raise the issue on the international and Arab levels with the aim of protecting our people and preventing harm to their rights and dignity. He hoped the efforts would succeed in restoring the rights and stands of the Palestinian people, who have contributed toward building and developing Kuwait. He also expressed the hope that no harm would be done to these people, who are being hunted by the enemies of the Arab nation led by the U.S. Administration and the Israeli forces that are occupying Arab and Palestinian territories.

Shaykh al-Sa'ih continued: We hope that the Arab nation will give serious consideration to these people and will understand their suffering as a result of the Zionist occupation and enable them to continue their struggle and set up their independent state.

During a meeting with 'Abd-al-Rahim Ahmad, PLO Executive Committee member, he said the PLO will not allow such practices to continue punishing the sons of the Palestinian people. He added that the PLO will take appropriate and deterrent measures to protect our people in Kuwait and everywhere. He stressed that the PLO will take a firm stand against all the evil hands that are playing havoc with the fate and lives of our people there. He maintained that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Ahmad went on to say that the aim of this plot, which is led by the United States and its allies, is to rid the Gulf region of all Arabs and to keep the region as a place to be devoured by the agents and traitors who allied themselves with the United States and the Atlantic forces in a conspiracy against the Arab nation.

The PLO Executive Committee member noted that the PLO had sent memoranda to the UN Security Council and the Arab League asking them to make serious efforts to stop this massacre and to grant the Palestinian people their right to return, to set up their independent state, and to live in freedom and dignity.

Saji Salamah, member of the political bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said that while PLO and the Palestinian resistance factions hope that the series of excesses against the Palestinian and Arab communities in Kuwait will stop immediately, they declare that they will not stand idly by in the face of the continuing campaign of executions and arrests against our people in Kuwait. He added: Under these circumstances the PLO expects the international community, international human rights organizations, and Western governments to shoulder their responsibility to protect Palestinian human rights. The application of legitimate international resolutions must be based on one criterion as they are an indivisible whole.

Salamah said that what is happening in Kuwait against our people is of great concern to the Palestinian people wherever they are. The Arab states must shoulder their responsibility toward protecting the Palestinian people in Kuwait and putting an immediate end to the excesses against them.

He added that the PLO is greatly anxious to create an atmosphere of positive and brotherly relations between our people wherever they are and other Arab people. Our people have demonstrated their positive and constructive role with their Arab brothers in all spheres and phases. The progress and renaissance witnessed in the

Gulf region and the Arabian Peninsula cannot be mentioned without mentioning the role of the Palestinian youths, who spent the best part of their lives in building and reconstructing this part of the Arab homeland. The Palestinian people should not be rewarded for their positive role with such excesses and attacks.

Salamah noted that, since the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait the PLO has not ceased its efforts to obtain assurances that our people in Kuwait will be protected.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [IFLP] has held the Kuwaiti Government and the coalition states fully responsible for what is happening to the Palestinian people in Kuwait. It called for their protection and for the preservation of their honor, rights, and dignity.

In a statement issued yesterday, the IFLP said that every drop of Palestinian blood shed in Kuwait will not go in vain. The statement noted that these brutal attacks have reached a dangerous point, have assumed an ugly and criminal character, and have reached an intolerable degree. The Zionist Mosad and U.S. and British intelligence agencies are supervising these massacres.

The statement said that these attacks are being committed in the sight of the Kuwaiti Government and within the framework of the lies and plots of international legitimacy and the civilized world against our people in Kuwait without any cause or reason, except that they have stood on the side of Arab rights.

Milhim Condemns 'Massacres'

LD2003225391 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1602 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Brother Muhammad Milhim, member of the PLO's Executive Committee, has said that the organization calls upon international humanitarian groups and all states interested in reaching a just peace to stop the massacres of Palestinians in Kuwait. The Palestinian official said the continuation of the massacres would inevitably lead to a response and would constitute the start of a frightening series. He added that there is an urgent need for unity once again in order to treat the wounds, and that the Palestinians are not enemies to anyone.

Abu-Sharif Urges Response to 'Torture'

LD2203084991 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Bassam Abu-Sharif, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, has said that 210 Palestinians have been killed in Kuwait under torture, by shooting, and by hanging.

In a statement, a copy of which was received by TAP last night, he added that hundreds of Palestinians, including a large number of youths under 16, are being led to Kuwaiti police stations, where they are tortured in indescribable ways, and that those who die as a result of torture are being buried in collective graves.

After noting that the Palestinians did not participate or contribute in any action against Kuwait and the Kuwaitis, Bassam Abu-Sharif said the PLO will not remain silent over the continuation of acts such as these, and will take all necessary measures to protect its people.

The Palestinian official demanded that the U.S. President, whose country is leading the allies' forces in the Gulf, apply the principles of human rights in this regard. He also accused the UN Secretary General De Cuellar of inadequacy in living up to his international responsibilities by remaining silent over what is happening and not protecting the Palestinians residing in Kuwait.

PLO: Must Stop 'Tragedy'

LD2203100191 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1602 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] A PLO official spokesman has made the following statement: American and European officials, as well as European, American, and Arab media, have stated that brutal acts of violence and abominable crimes have been committed and are being committed against the Palestinian community in Kuwait. These acts have gone as far as murder after savage torture, detention or abduction of thousands, and besieging the places where the Palestinians live. Palestinians are barred from receiving all the needs and amenities of life, such as water, electricity, contacts, communications, medical supplies, and food relief.

Official envoys and the media are prevented from entering the places housing the bodies of the victims of these barbarous crimes, which are carried out to a grave extent according to Kuwaiti officials. They say that scores of the sons of the Palestinian community are buried in mass graves.

We appeal to world public opinion and all the leaders and masses of our Arab nation, in the face of this grave situation and ugly crimes for which all the states that have forces in Kuwaiti territories bear responsibility, to act immediately to stop these horrible tragedies.

The PLO has contacted Arab and international quarters to stop these massacres and crimes and put an end to this new tragedy to which well over 150,000 Palestinians are exposed. These Palestinians are compelled to stay in Kuwait because there is no other place to which they can go.

The PLO demands from all officials at the United Nations, the states that have forces on Kuwaiti teritory, the UN Security Council permanent members, leaders of the EEC states, the Arab and Islamic states, the nonaligned states, and regional and international organizations, to shoulder their responsibilities to stop this planned tragedy against the Palestinian community in Kuwait, about which no humane conscience or feeling can keep silent.

PLO Sources Deny Abu-Sharif Resignation

PM2103150491 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Mar 91 pp 1, 4

[Zaki Shihab report: "PLO Sources Deny Reports of Abu-Sharif's Resignation"]

[Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, news agencies—PLO sources in Tunis yesterday denied the report that Bassam Abu-Sharif, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, had submitted his resignation following the controversy prompted by his recent statements. They quoted Abu-Sharif himself as saying that the report was wrong and totally untrue.

The Egyptian Middle East News Agency [MENA] had said that Abu-Sharif sent his resignation from London following the criticisms leveled at him over statements attributed to him regarding the PLO's willingness to launch a new initiative and to concede some land. Abu-Sharif denied that he could have said that and sent the PLO leadership in Tunis a recorded copy of his interview with the British Sky television channel.

The sources said that Abu-Sharif is currently on a European tour and no decision to summon him to Tunis has been made. Palestinian sources said that "the rumors about measures against Abu-Sharif lie within the context of known past sensitivities and have nothing to do with his actual statements."

The also said that "from time to time campaigns are directed against some of the moderates close to the the PLO leader in order to paralyze them." The sources said that Abu-Sharif has been an elected Palestine National Council member since 1971.

Well-informed Palestinian sources had said that Abu-Sharif submitted his resignation two days after the Fatah Central Committee convened its meetings under 'Arafat in Tunis—the meetings at which the statements made by Abu-Sharif were discussed. They also said that a number of Central Committee members demanded during these meetings that Abu-Sharif's activities be suspended and that he be dismissed.

Although Abu-Sharif, who left London last Saturday, issued a clarification of his statements—saying that he did not broach the matter of offering concessions, presented no new ideas for strengthening the negotiation process in the Middle East, and did not say that the PLO was willing to cede territories to that end—it did not prevent his being vehemently criticized by PLO leaders, one Palestinian leader going as far as to tell the BBC that he should be "crucified."

Abu-Sharif, who arrived in London in the middle of last week, canceled a press conference following the uproar prompted by his statements. But last Friday he accepted an invitation to lunch with David Gore-Booth, the official in charge of the British Foreign Office's Middle East section. They discussed developments in the Middle East region and exchanged various views.

This is not the first time that statements made by Abu-Sharif have sparked a controversy in the world press, since an article he published in THE WASHINGTON POST some years ago prompted a similar controversy.

It is known that Bassam Abu-Sharif, who was a Politburo member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was dismissed following an organizational decision by the front's leadership as a result of his statements and complete support for the PLO's policy. In 1987 he became information adviser to the PLO leader. In 1989, after the start of the dialogue between Britain and the PLO, he was entrusted with representing Yasir 'Arafat at any future meetings. That decision was conveyed to William Waldegrave, then minister of state at the British Foreign Office.

A prominent Palestinian figure who spoke to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT attached no importance to the matter and said that what is discussed at Central Committee meetings is much more important and involves proposing a new overview of Palestinian action in the stage ahead—a view whereby it can be benefit from the lessons of the past. Two Tunisian newspapers yesterday published the report about Abu-Sharif's resignation, saying that he had sent it from London.

Abu-Sharif Denies Announcing New Initiative

PM2103160691 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Mar 91 pp 1, 7

[Unattributed report: "Abu-Sharif Tells AL-HAYAH: I Gave a New Explanation of an Old Initiative; Baker Tries To Persuade Damascus To Hold Direct Talks With Israel"]

[Excerpts] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker yesterday began his talks in Damascus, from where he is expected to proceed to Ankara and Moscow. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Bassam Abu-Sharif, Yasir 'Arafat's adviser, yesterday caused a political storm when a television network quoted him as saying that there was a new Palestinian initiative and that the PLO was willing to make "concessions." Abu-Sharif, however, has explained to AL-HAYAH that the report carried by the network and news agencies was "not true" and that what he did was "explain President 'Arafat's initiative of December 1988" and that he "just crystallized some of its ideas—no more, no less." He added: "I gave a new explanation of an old initiative."

His statements elicited a negative response from the PLO leadership in Tunis, particularly after agencies quoted him as saying that the PLO was prepared to make "concessions" relating to West Bank territory. The Israeli response was a prompt rejection of everything the PLO offered.

'Abdallah al-Dardari writes from Damascus that President Hafiz al-Asad received Secretary Baker yesterday. [passage omitted]

In London, 'Ali al-Ruzz reports that Bassam Abu-Sharif explained to AL-HAYAH that he gave "a new explanation of an old initiative" not "a new initiative," and that he never uttered the words "territorial concessions." He said he wished that "the brothers who reacted hastily" would read and listen carefully to what he said before rushing to comment on it.

With regard to the response to his statement from Faysal al-Husayni', director of the Arab Studies Society in occupied Jerusalem, he said: "I wish brother Faysal would not slip. We are as faithful to the national causes as he is and our struggle history is known to Faysal and all the brothers at home and abroad... but today we are engaged in a fierce political battle with a cunning enemy."

Abu-Sharif said that he considered "strange the negative reactions of some brothers in the PLO to my statement to British Sky Television."

He added: "In the face of the attempts made by Western political circles and media circles hostile to our Palestinian people's rights to exclude the PLO from the political arena and to marginalize the role of brother President Yasir 'Arafat, I explained the Palestinian viewpoint, which can be summed up as follows:

The PLO is the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative, Yasir 'Arafat was lawfully elected by the National Council, and no foreign political quarter is entitled to interfere in the domestic affairs of the PLO and the Palestinians.

We form a positive view of what President Bush said in Congress. His position on the land for peace formula and on implementation of UN Resolutions 242 and 338 was resolute and indicated the earnestness of the U.S. position.

He pointed out that the PLO leadership "instructed some brothers to meet with Secretary Baker to explain the PLO's position on the need for the application of international law in the Middle East using a single standard, and the need to enable the Palestinian people to secure national independence."

He said that the meeting was positive, adding: "We see it as a first step toward opening a serious and meaningful dialogue on the implementation of the U.S. commitment to end the occupation and fulfill the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, and that tye resumption of the dialogue between the PLO and the United States was a necessary step to pave the way for peace."

He reaffirmed the PLO's adherence to its 1988 peace initiative and to its position and program, noting that "the establishment of two states on the Palestinian territory which was at one time under British mandate was the solution; that coexistence, peace, and cooperation between them was possible in the interest of building a better future for the coming generations; and that security guarantees for both states could by arranged by the international community through an international conference, including deployment of UN forces on the borders between the two states."

He also said: "The solution could include a brief interim period during which UN or international forces would replace the Israeli forces to enable the Palestinian people to have free elections and free nominations, and to build their own independent state.

"During the interim period the PLO would not send its forces into Palestinian territory. International forces would maintain the security of the Palestinian territory and people in accordance with the Security Council resolutions.

"The Palestinian state will undoubtedly need a corridor to link the West Bank with the Gaza Strip. That is a matter which should be negotiated, just as the water problem and other details should be negotiated."

Regarding the Palestinian representation, he said that "the PLO will name its delegation to the negotiations. Such a delegation may consist of Palestinians from inside [the occupied territory] and outside, as previously agreed with the U.S. Administration, and with Baker in particular."

Sky News asked Abu-Sharif some questions on his arrival in London Tuesday-Wednesday night. [passage omitted]

'Abd-Rabbuh Discusses Solution, Jordanian Role

NC1303023091 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 12 Mar 91 p 9

[Interview with Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, PLO Executive Committee member and head of the PLO Information Department, by Tawfiq 'Abid; place and date not given]

[Text] ['Abid] There has been a flurry of statements by U.S. officials regarding a solution of the Middle East problem, particularly the Palestinian issue. Do you believe that after the events in the Gulf, they are serious about reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue?

['Abd-Rabbuh] So far it does not seem that the U.S. and European approach toward the Palestinian issue is in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy. From the declared goals of the U.S. secretary of state's tour, in the light of the Damascus meeting's results and political declaration, and through the European stands we have observed, it would appear that the priority for the United States and its European allies is to achieve so-called security arrangements in the Gulf region and to

establish a security and military umbrella with the participation of some Arab states and other regional forces, especially Turkey.

As far as any talk about the Palestinian issue is concerned, it is tantamount to blowing smoke. Such talk seeks to cushion the impact of the destructive war launched against Iraq and to resurrect the impression that the U.S. and European efforts are serious in their approach. Proof of this is that the U.S. statements and stands speak about talks on Palestinian representation and the PLO's role with the Arab states Baker will visit. What arouses astonishment and repugnance is that some Arab states have gone along by colluding with the U.S. stand publicly and overtly and by circumventing the Palestinian representation and the PLO's role.

The U.S. approach to dealing with the Palestinian issue at present is to try to sidestep the PLO. Instead of working to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy on the Palestinian problem, the United States is trying to divert attention from this problem and to transform the issue of Palestinian representation into a domestic Arab issue. Consequently, it is trying to create inter-Arab differences and Palestinian-Arab differences.

These are the objectives of the U.S. activity, as we see them. If we have said there were some positive points in U.S. President Bush's statements, we have also indicated that these positive words need to be translated into deeds. We have not seen this happen yet.

Some Arab voices and stands have given their backing to this U.S. plan, which in reality aims at stalemating the Palestinian issue once again by undercutting the Palestinian representation or by transforming this issue into a domestic Arab problem instead of an international problem, which the world would be responsible for solving in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

['Abid] The issue of contesting the Palestinian representation is nothing new, but earlier attempts all failed. What will be the fate of these new attempts?

['Abd-Rabbuh] These attempts have no chance of success, particularly during the age of the Palestinian intifadah. We are very sad to see that some persons in Damascus or Riyadh have been dragged into these plans. We know, however, that these persons are helpless, and that the main body of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian national movement are cohesive and united inside and outside the homeland. There has never been such rallying around the PLO and such support for its representation of the Palestinian people as there is now.

There have been several attempts by the Israeli occupation to split the Palestinian national ranks. There are new attempts now through summoning some of the persons who used to have links with the agent village leagues and other suspect groups. These attempts, however, are nothing more than another turn in the vicious cycle. There is not a single Palestinian national figure who is ready to get involved in such plans. What we are interested in now is to bolster Palestinian unity inside the occupied territories, to confront any minor differences with a spirit of national unity, and to remain determined to confront all attempts to impugn or to strike at the Palestinian representation. Therefore, it is the comprehensive national responsibility of all Palestinian factions and all Palestinian national figures to protect this unity. In light of this, we call on our brothers in the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, to promote the militant and national ties and to check the enemy attempts to split the unity of the Palestinian action. We believe that all Palestinian forces are now brave and politically and militantly mature enough to thwart all these plans.

['Abid] Various reports have mentioned the possibility that the February agreement between Jordan and the PLO may be revived. How accurate are these reports and are the circumstances appropriate for such a step?

['Abd-Rabbuh] The ties of understanding and coordination between Jordan and the PLO are stronger than any agreements. In the wake of the legal and administrative disengagement with the occupied West Bank and the establishment of the state of Palestine, relations are now based on far clearer and stronger foundations than they were in the past. These relations derive their strength from history, geography, and common national and pan-Arab interests.

We know that there are attempts now to weaken these strong relations between Palestine and Jordan by trying to resurrect old plans. Our response to this is that the Jordanian option, for example, is not an option adopted by Jordan, and the alternative homeland is not a Palestinian option. The real Jordanian option is the national independence of the Palestinian people on their liberated land; the real Palestinian option is the establishment of the Palestinian state and strong ties with sisterly Jordan on all levels.

This is the inevitable future dictated by our shared objectives and interests. The important thing now is to maintain and develop the level of sisterly relations and coordination between Jordan and Palestine as well as to face the ongoing maneuvers with a united stand as was underscored by His Majesty King Husayn and the PLO. The world should implement the resolutions of international legitimacy in Palestine and the Middle East as they were implemented in the Gulf crisis. The Palestinian people know their sole legitimate representative. There can be no alternative to this representative role, either within the Palestinian people or outside them.

['Abid] Should I understand from what you said that Jordanian-Palestinian relations have bypassed the agreement of February 1985?

['Abd-Rabbuh] No party is discussing the February agreement. The bases of relations between Jordan and the PLO are stronger than all agreements.

['Abid] In light of some Arab states' stands toward the PLO, do you expect that these states' hostility to the PLO will reach the point where they withdraw their recognition?

['Abd-Rabbuh] Those who talk about an alternative know full well that it is impossible to find an alternative to the PLO. The true objective of this plan, however, is not to find an alternative, but to deprive the Palestinian people of any representational capacity and to undermine the PLO's role in order to freeze the Palestine question. This is the objective of the plan, because, actually, they are not looking for an alternative to the PLO leadership in order to find a positive solution to the Palestine question through this new alternative leadership. They do not want to replace individuals; they want to replace the Palestinian national program, to suspend the attainment of rights, and to freeze the situation as it was before the eruption of the Gulf crisis. Therefore, any attempt to interfere in internal Palestinian affairs is doomed to failure, and a handful of people in this or that capital will not be able to carry out these plans. In fact, recent and earlier events show that such schemes have foundered time and again on the rock of steadfastness and the unity of the Palestinian national position.

From this premise, I would like to stress that the goal here is not to find an alternative to the PLO, but to obliterate the Palestinian representation to pave the way for freezing the Palestine question and giving Israel enough time, through Jewish emigration from the USSR and other states, to create a new fait accompli in the occupied Palestinian territories. What they want is to procrastinate and to buy time until they can say that the real problem is not with Israel or the United States, but it is that the Palestinians are not in agreement among themselves, that the Arabs also have differences on the Palestinian representation, or that the problem is an internal Palestinian and Arab affair, to say something that justifies the freezing of the Palestine question and the nonimplementation of international legitimacy.

['Abid] There has been talk recently of the possible formation of a Jordanian-Palestinian or Arab delegation for regional peace talks. How accurate are these reports?

['Abd-Rubbuh] We do not want to fall into this trap once again. The issue has nothing to do with the formation of delegations, with the composition of these delegations, or with shape of the negotiating table. The essential and substantial question concerns whether or not the United States, Israel, and the Europeans are ready to commit themselves to the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy on the Palestine question and the occupied Arab territories. This is the heart of the matter which we need to keep in mind and try to highlight at present. As for the form of possible future negotiations, this is of minor importance. For our part, we have repeatedly affirmed that the only suitable framework for talks is an international conference and that the Palestinian representation should be independent and decided by the PLO. This, however, does not necessarily preclude a formula for inter-Arab coordination. This is important because a lack of coordination in this regard would enable Israel and the United States to deal with each Arab state unilaterally and allow them to achieve the declared Israeli objective, which is giving precedence to achieving conciliation between Israel and the Arab states over any tackling of the Palestine question. We believe that the Arabs should unify and coordinate their positions in this regard. Before discussing the details about this, which we do not believe will turn into a bone of contention among the Arabs, we should unify the Arab position on the bases for negotiations at an international conference. The bases for such negotiations are clearly spelled out in the resolutions of international legitimacy and the United Nations on the Palestine question, the right to self-determination, and the independence of the Palestinian people.

['Abid] Israel has come up with the idea of holding a regional rather than international conference.

['Abd-Rabbuh] The Israelis want separate solutions with the Arab states. They want such solutions to take precedence over any other issue. They seek conciliation and peace agreements with the Arab states. As for the Palestine question, they want it to be tackled in such a way that the Arabs accept the perpetuation of the occupation as a fait accompli. They want the Palestine question to be settled in accordance with Shamir's plan and the Camp David accords which offer nothing more than self-rule.

This is the Israeli position. That is why the Israelis are setting conditions regarding Palestinian representation. They, along with the United States, want to select Palestinians who approve of this scheme so that these Palestinians can endorse it. It goes without saying that such things can never be called peace negotiations or talks. This reflects the renewal of efforts to make the Arab states and some Palestinians, if possible, accept the Israeli and U.S. capitulationist terms.

['Abid] Some voices are calling for the establishment of a Palestinian government in exile. Do you think the time is ripe to declare such a government?

['Abd-Rabbuh] This is not an urgent matter. This idea has been muted ever since the Palestine National Council convened in Algiers in 1988. The PLO Executive Committee has the authorization to form this government at the proper time, which depends on two basic points—first, the consolidation of Palestinian national unity inside and outside the homeland and, second, progress in the peace process.

I can say that national unity has reached an advanced stage. The peace process has not yet seen a glimmer of light. This does not mean, however, that this idea will not be discussed in the next few months. There has been no outright acceptance or rejection of it. As I said, this matter is not under discussion because it is not urgent.

['Abid] What must be done on the Palestinian level to confront the onslaught against the PLO and especially against the intifadah?

['Abd-Rabbuh] The basis of every political move is the upholding of the intifadah and the escalation of its confrontation of occupation. This is the pivot of all Palestinian national action in all spheres. All our national efforts must be focused on providing the highest degree of support for the intifadah and on correcting the mistakes of the past in an open and democratic way. This will enable us to see any shortcomings which may have occurred in the Palestinian nation and which may have prevented the full mobilization of all resources and capabilities to serve this goal.

The developments in the Gulf crisis and other developments have proved once again that the center of the Palestinian national process must be inside the Palestinian homeland. All external and pan-Arab support for Palestinian action must be geared toward developing and supporting the popular intifadah inside the occupied homeland.

The use of firearms is linked to the whole strategy of Palestinian struggle and to what extent it serves the intifadah and its development so that it may score further achievements and victories against the Israeli occupation. There are no foolproof methods. The main question is how to protect the intifadah and to strengthen its steadfastness and development.

['Abid] Regarding Baker's visit to the region, do we expect any positive results of this visit in favor of the peace issue, or is it only an attempt to defuse Arab indigation toward the United States as a result of its aggression against Iraq?

['Abd-Rabbuh] There are new signs, the most important of which is that Baker has said that he will discuss the PLO's role with some of the Arab states he will visit. It seems that they do not know that the days when the role and future of the Palestinian representation was determined through Arab or outside parties are over. As I said, however, this is a sign of decline and retreat in the Arab situation, because this is the first time for many years now that this tune is being played again with this degree of insolence. The campaigns against the PLO leadership are actually not aimed at specific persons inasmuch as they are aimed at the entire Palestinian role and representation. Moreover, these campaigns are aimed at the Palestinian independence program to which the PLO and its leadership adhere. All past pressures were aimed at undermining this program.

As you know, the PLO has not the slightest objection if some of our brothers in the occupied territories meet with the U.S. secretary of state or anyone else. In the past week, a Palestinian delegation met with the European Troika and with Canadian representatives. I can say that these meetings have made the magic trick backfire against the magician himself. If the objective of some sides was to depict these meetings as an alternative to the PLO, then the Palestinian delegations, during the meetings that were held both inside or outside the occupied homeland, proved that our brothers spoke for the PLO and defended its program, especially because it provides a large framework that encompasses all Palestinians inside and outside the occupied homeland. If the meeting with Baker was to take place, then it will be based on the commitment to the Palestinian representation and program so that the magic trick would backfire against the magician himself once again.

['Abid] Some people believe that 1991 will be the year of peace in the region. It appears, though, you are not optimistic.

['Abd-Rabbuh] 1991 could be the year of peace if the Security Council takes practical and tangible steps to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy on the Palestinian issue with the same degree of enthusiasm and meticulousness with which it dealt with the Gulf issue. Even a lesser degree would be acceptable.

But the signs so far, particularly in light of the U.S. and Israeli stands, do not indicate that there is real movement toward the door of peace. There will be a lot of talk about compliance with international legitimacy and the need to implement it, but we do not see, and it appears we will not see in the near future, any tangible and practical steps in this direction if we do not—by uniting the national Palestinian stand and achieving a comprehensive reconciliation among all Arab parties on the bases of the Arab summits' resolutions and of compliance with and adherence to international legitimacy—seek to have a united and joint Arab effort to pressure the world and the Security Council to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

This is the only national and pan-Arab course that would make us believe peace was approaching. Without this, we will be back in the whirlpool of U.S. notions and promises that attempt to sow divisions and disputes in our Arab and Palestinian ranks as the alternative to implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy.

['Abid] Do you think Arab reconciliation is possible after Arab sides participated in undermining Iraq's pan-Arab upsurge?

['Abd-Rabbuh] We believe that the reconciliation must be based on the resolutions and positions adopted unanimously at the Arab summits. Before and after the war, as you know, Iraq stressed its readiness for reconciliation on these bases. The Palestinians and several other Arab sides have always insisted on Arab solutions, where our problems are addressed within a pan-Arab framework and with a view to safeguarding pan-Arab security.

Current U.S. schemes, on the other hand, are aimed at splitting Arab ranks, entrenching divisions, bringing Arab sides to full and absolute subservience to U.S.

hegemony and domination over the region, and turning those Arab sides into mere guards for oil and U.S. interests.

Despite all this, efforts to achieve Arab reconciliation on the established bases, especially the Arab summit resolutions, should continue, and pan-Arab security should be protected within an Arab framework.

['Abid] Do you think the call for an Arab summit to achieve reconciliation is now possible?

['Abd-Rabbuh] It is too soon. A successful Arab summit cannot be guaranteed until positions are brought closer and the minimum level of common ground that existed before is recreated.

['Abid] Has the PLO recently received any new proposals or plans from European sides?

['Abd-Rabbuh] There are no peace plans, and we would not welcome any new ones. There is only one plan that enjoys international unanimity; namely, the resolutions of international legitimacy and the United Nations on the Palestine question.

The Europeans and other parties involved in the Middle East crisis are required to show readiness to begin implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy and to activate the role of the Security Council for this purpose.

The game of plans and counterplans, on the other hand, is a way to procrastinate, and we should not become trapped in this game once again.

Algeria

FIA Chairman Madani Views Lessons of Gulf War

PM2103122291 Paris LE FIGARO in French 5 Mar 91 p 4

[Interview with Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, FIS, Chairman Abassi Madani by Jean-Yves Donor in Algiers; date not given]

[Text] [Donor] Shaykh Abassi, what did you wish to show by condemning France's role in the Gulf war?

[Madani] We maintain political and economic relations with France, but if these were reassuring before the Gulf conflict, they now pose a problem. The political desert has turned Algeria, a producer country, into a consumer country. This is also the case with the most essential foodstuffs. Where does the grain which we formerly produced ourselves come from? From Paris. Where do the potatoes which we ourselves used to produce in Mascara come from? From France. We are in a dangerous situation. If the United States asks France to organize an embargo against Algeria tomorrow, what will we do? We should not longer rely on other countries. We no longer wish to take part in this economic crime—making our people a people of aid recipients. Self-sufficiency is an absolute duty, even if we are to continue our relations with France.

[Donor] Is this a way of learning the lesson from the embargo decreed against Iraq?
[Madani] We will learn all the lessons from this conflict. One of our greatest mistakes was to make France our supply center. We are certain that our autonomy is necessary.

[Donor] What kind of relations do you advocate between Algeria and France?
[Madani] The France of freedoms and democracy has faded away. The question is whether we can find it again as it used to be. I do not believe so.

[Donor] The majority of the Algerian people supported Saddam Husayn. Do you feel that a rift between Algeria and France has occurred?
[Madani] There are always uncontrollable incidents in mass demonstrations. A crowd is like the sea; it is difficult to control. The problem of the Middle East is not a problem between states, just as Saddam Husayn is not a personal case. I do not believe that Saddam Husayn and his entire country deserved such destruction.

Islam, Savior of Mankind

[Donor] In one of your sermons, you criticized the Arabs for not being equal to the situation.
[Madani] Who has been equal to the events in this conflict? The Westerners? The Security Council? Was Mr. Mitterrand's political stance equal to the France in which we had faith? Was a Europe subordinate to the United States that of which De Gaulle dreamed—a united and free Europe? The whole world was subordinate to the cowboy. What a degree of civilization! But the savage killing of a people is no new occurrence. Civilization as we imagine it should ensure the security of all nations.

[Donor] Islamic civilization?
[Madani] Islam is the savior of civilization, of mankind. The change which has occurred in Algeria was freely chosen by the people. The Gulf conflict has intensified the Algerians' awareness. They have drawn closer to Islam.

[Donor] Following its victory in the 12 June local elections, the Islamic Salvation Front now controls 835 out of the 1,539 Algerian municipalities, but some municipal people's assemblies (APC) have not met their voters' aspirations. Some decisions have even aroused strong opposition: The latest is a decision signed by the chairman of the Annaba APC banning dance contests deemed incompatible with Islamic values. What is your opinion?
[Madani] If there have been excesses and provocative attitudes, there is nothing we can do about it. The FIS is well aware of the Algerian people's everyday problems. Our experience is growing daily through contact with reality. We have made some mistakes. We are trying to correct them.

[Donor] Does the FIS still remain the leading Algerian political party.
[Madani] That is not the point. The situation in our country requires change. We are in a crisis situation and we have a duty to save our people. The government no longer exists, and if the date of the next elections were delayed again, it would be proof of a complete lack of common sense, because the earliest is too late as it is.

Parties 'Regret' Rejection of Elections Proposal

LD2003102891 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Following the Presidency's response to the message of the seven political parties concerning early legislative elections, the concerned seven political parties, in addition to the MAJD [Algerian Movement for Justice and Development] party, which is led by Mr. Kasdi Merbah, met yesterday evening at the headquarters of the Algerian Renewal Party.

The eight parties issued at the conclusion of their meeting a statement in this regard, which stated the following:

The president of the Republic, in resorting to general considerations and giving legitimacy to an existing political reality, has avoided rejection of the parties' proposal to delegate the task of preparing and monitoring the first fee legislative elections in the country to a committee composed of representatives of the parties taking part in the elections, as well as members representing the

administration, under the supervision of a high court judge appointed by the president.

This constructive proposal was aiming, in the view of the signatories, at *removing the fear of the government* emanating from the FLN [National Liberation Front], which itself is a party in the contest; at underlining the legitimate and legal right of the opposition to search for a way to ensure an organized and disciplined elections; and at gaining knowledge of the rules of competition—which are of prime importance to the future of the country—before being involved in it.

This five-point proposal does not violate any known legal ruling and offers a mechanism for consultations between the government and the opposition on proposals to amend the election bill and the administrative boundaries bill before referring them to the National People's Assembly for approval.

As for the public information media and financing, they do not pose a problem, unless perhaps the government was intending to run them both for its own benefit, as it had done so far. By rejecting this humble proposal, the president of the Republic is justifying fears of rigging in the legislative elections, for the benefit of the party to which he is affiliated. Furthermore, it destroys any hope for a peaceful and democratic rotation of power at a very serious era in our history.

The signatories regret the refusal to accept a neutral body that will respond to the requirements of the situation, and appeal to all parties concerned with the elections to hold urgent consultations. In this respect the signatories maintain the right to embark on any realistic action that will ensure the democratic expression of the popular will.

Accused Bank Embezzlers Given Death Sentences

LD2003200291 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1200 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] In the case of the BEA, the Algerian External Bank [embezzlement trial], a verdict has been returned yesterday after a 25-day trial. Mr. Mohouche, the main defendant in the case, has been sentenced to death. Two other death sentences are reported but nobody could confirm them to us: All those interrogated declined to answer. Other sentences were also given ranging from five to 20 years in jail; some of the accused were acquitted. I was just saying that all those questioned declined to answer, but that is not quite the truth since one of them, Maitre Rezak Bara, one of the defense lawyers, was contacted by telephone this morning by Mouloud Zerak, and we will now listen to him explaining what the sentence included.

[Begin recording] [Maitre Rezzak Bara] Well, in the so-called BEA case, the verdict was returned yesterday evening, late in the evening. There were four death sentences: against Mohouche, Lares, and against two accused on the run: Liazid and Djebari. There were also five prison sentences to 20 years and [other] sentences to 10 and 12 years. Two of the accused were acquitted. This verdict somehow surprised us. Although as men of law we have neither the right nor the possibility to express an opinion on a judgment by a court, we can nevertheless say that we are extremely surprised by the severity of these decisions. It is the first time in the history of economic crime cases in Algeria that accused present at the trial were sentenced to death in cases of economic crimes, with the exception of the sad case of the SNTR [National Company for Road Transportation] in 1969. It brings us back to times which we thought were gone forever.

Furthermore, we went to see the accused who were sentence to death this morning. We were all very surprised to observe that they are already being treated like potential candidates for death sentence although appeals have been lodged. They were chained, they wore the special dress of those sentenced to death, and we decided to set up a committee that will go to the Ministry [unpsecified] to say that appeals have been lodged, sentences are suspended, and, if one wants to respect human rights in this country, these people must be considered as not yet definitely sentenced as long as the final judgment of the Supreme Court has not been passed. I can tell you that all the accused, all the people sentenced, will lodge appeals, not only the two accused present who were sentenced to death, but also the other accused who were given prison sentences of 10, 12, and 20 years. We hope, we are convinced, that the Supreme Court will quash these sentences on judicial considerations that we find absolutely unanswerable. [end recording]

Egypt

Paper Views Israeli-Palestinian Question

NC1603083591 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0435 GMT 16 Mar 91

[From the Press Review]

[Text] Under the headline "Israel and the Palestine Question," AL-AHRAM's editorial says: The Palestine question is again being put at the top of the agendas for the diplomatic meetings taking place now in the region. It seems there is an intention to resolve that question and boost the peace process after everyone has become convinced that this urgent and vital problem is the core of the conflict. U.S. Secretary of State Baker's visit to the region and his numerous meetings with the representatives of the sides to the conflict fall within that context with the aim of formulating the appropriate framework and formula for the desired and expected peace initiative.

The paper says: It appears that the U.S. Government wants to apply the international legitimacy on the Palestine question in order to refute the accusations that it has double standards. The question remains: What about the Israeli attitude on this process as a whole? This is not clear yet. No one envies Israel's position. It either agrees

to go ahead with the current peace process, with a guarantee of security and stability; or it adheres to its previous stands, rejecting all of the previous efforts. This would put the new world order to the test once again.

Commentary: New World Order Tested in Mideast

NC2103164291 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1240 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Muhammad Sharaf commentary: "Another Crucial Test for the New World Order in the Middle East"]

[Text] Observers of current international activity to address the basic problem in the Middle East, namely, the Arab-Israeli conflict, can see one fact clearly: that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and the radicals in the ruling Likud bloc are trying to put the issue back on the same vicious cycle that it was prior to the Gulf crisis. There are strong indications that all direct and indirect parties to the problem, foremost the United States, genuinely intend and want to reach a swift, just, and comprehensive settlement in the region. We mention the United States because all the parties attach a crucial importance to its role in ending the conflict and establishing peace in the Middle East, particularly in view of its role in the Gulf crisis. The reason is obvious: The United States has all the means to influence the Israelis, and much depends on how it acts at the Security Council.

Before analyzing the position of the Israeli Government under Shamir, we will briefly review how the parties concerned approach the issue. Regarding the United States, President Bush stressed certain important facts: First, Washington will not let slip the present opportunity to settle the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict; second, the basis of a settlement in the region lies in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and the exchange of land for peace. Washington has not yet made a decision on the practical steps for a settlement, but all indications are that the U.S. move will not be long in coming.

As for the Europeans, we can say they have no substantial differences with the United States' position. There might be differences about the framework for a solution and other marginal matters, but the substance is the same. Both parties agree on the need for Israel's withdrawal from the Arab land occupied in the 1967 war and for a guarantee of the Palestinian people's legitimate political rights; that is, application of international legitimacy on the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict as it was applied to the Gulf crisis.

The Soviet stand is well known and is based on the need for respect for the UN Charter and all its resolutions and recommendations on the Middle East. The whole world is waiting for the quick application of international legitimacy to the longstanding conflict. All Arab parties, including the Palestinians, are ready to recognize Israel and accept coexistence in keeping with the charters, laws, agreements, and norms governing relations between countries, if Israel agrees to international legitimacy. Specifically, if it agrees to withdraw from the territories occupied since June 1967 and from southern Lebanon, and recognizes all the political rights of the Palestinian people, primarily their right to determine their future. There are strong indications that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker conveyed this clear message to both Israel and Washington after his recent talks in Cairo, Riyadh, and Damascus. As a matter of fact, these positions are not new but were well known and defined even before the Gulf crisis. The new factor is that Arab and world public opinion expects that the Gulf crisis' aftermath will have visible influence on the position of Shamir and the ruling Likud bloc along with the other radical rightist parties in Israel. The Gulf war proved in practice, and through the huge losses and the bloodshed, that the policy of expansion, aggression, and force in this extremely delicate region of the world will have dire consequences for all parties.

It seems, however, that the Israeli Government is still talking about how it has to agree on who will represent the Palestinians in the peace process. Israel still declares that it will not withdraw from this or that part of the occupied land. One day spokesmen for the government say that they want to negotiate with the Arab parties without preconditions, and the next day they set conditions impossible to accept. The Israeli officials' statements are contradictory. Chief of Staff Dan Shomron said Israel can now agree to the idea of exchanging land for peace, and that when a political settlement is reached it will mean much more than territory, because it will be linked to imposed restrictions on armament, on the superiority of one country over another, and on several other issues. What Shomron says is correct and sound by all standards. Housing Minister Sharon, however, who is an extreme radical, talks of Israel's need for strategic depth and goes ahead and declares the expansion of settlements in the Syrian Golan and in the occupied land in general. The question being asked is: Can the Arab people agree to a return to stalling and procrastination? The answer is that the confidence of the Arab people and the people of the rest of the world in the so-called new world order based on absolute compliance with international legitimacy is now put to a decisive test in the Middle East.

Information Secretary on Postwar Security Policy

NC2203120591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0850 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Mustafa al-Fiqi, President Husni Mubarak's information secretary, has reaffirmed that Egypt is against partitioning Iraqi territories and striking at the right wing of Arab strength. He said that Egypt stands with a "strong Iraq," not with an "aggressor Iraq." Al-Fiqi also explained that now that Kuwait has been liberated, Egypt's military role has come to an end.

Speaking at the intellectual meeting organized by the Egyptian General Book Authority last night, al-Fiqi added that what has been happening in Iraq is the responsibility of the Iraqi leadership, since it enabled the superpowers to enter the region and presented the opportunity to Israel, Turkey, and Iran to achieve gains they never dreamed of.

Dr. Mustafa al-Fiqi explained that the Gulf crisis will cause a fundamental change in Arab-Arab relations in general and Egyptian-Arab relations in particular. He pointed out that these relations will not be restored to their pre-2 August status, the day of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

He also said that some Arab countries will try to rearrange their positions, especially the Arab Maghreb countries, which have had reservations about the policies of Middle East countries. He expressed the hope, however, that the Arab Maghreb would not dissociate itself from Middle East countries in the future. [passage omitted]

Concerning the security arrangements in the region in the aftermath of the liberation of Kuwait, Dr. Mustafa al-Fiqi asserted that these arrangements should be made by Arab sides, even if some non-Arab countries take part in these arrangements at the beginning. He noted that Egypt is the main pillar of any security arrangements in the region, "whether others like it or not." He also said that the Gulf war is not yet over in practical terms, since there is still no permanent cease-fire. In this regard, he also asserted that Egypt is against the long-term presence of foreign forces in the region. [passage omitted]

Referring to the Palestine question, Dr. al-Fiqi asserted that Egypt does not interfere in Palestinian decisionmaking, and does not impose anything on the Palestinians or bargain on their behalf. He said Egypt will deal with what the Palestinians and their leadership deem appropriate.

President Mubarak's information secretary also asserted that Egypt has nothing against Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and that Egypt supports the Palestinian people's legitimate cause. [passage omitted]

Editorial Stresses Need to Return Occupied Land

NC2203083291 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Mar 91

[From the press review]

[Text] In its editorial today, AL-AKHBAR points out that the principle of land for peace, which has been emphasized by the Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolutions 242 and 338, on a Middle East settlement, means that every inch of territory Israel occupies must be returned to its rightful Arab owners. Any other solution would be incomplete, and the conflict would continue as long as Israel believed it had the right to control or to annex any piece of Arab land.

The paper adds: At a time when preparations are under way to create the proper climate for talks between Israel and the Arab parties, especially the rightful owners of the occupied territories in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, many responsible circles in Israel are making obvious efforts to close all the doors before they are even opened. This is a military tactic which shows that Tel Aviv is unwilling to cede any part of the occupied territories, which it claims are necessary to ensure its security.

AL-AKHBAR draws attention to the fact that if the international community condones the perpetuation of this situation, a serious precedent will be set and chaos will prevail in the international arena, especially if other countries follow the Israeli example and occupy parts of neighboring countries to establish security strips on their neighbors' land.

Concluding its editorial, the paper asserts that the setting of any preconditions for international negotiations to remove the causes of the dispute and pave the way for peace would invalidate these talks, which should be held without preconditions. Also, any agreement on the return of the occupied territories must account for every inch of land. If any part, however small, remains under occupation, the dispute and the hostility will continue and any peace would be a very fragile one.

State of Emergency Reported in Baghdad

LD2103211791 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] In an attempt to prevent the spread of the uprising in Iraq, the Iraqi Government has declared a state of emergency in Baghdad. Reports received from Iraq further indicate that the commander of the 30th division of the 4th brigade of the Iraqi Army was taken prisoner by the opposition forces during an attack on the Bazargan region in eastern Iraq.

Opposition Radio on Abduction of Al-Khu'i, Son

NC2103204291 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1939 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Brothers and sisters, we draw your attention to this news report we have just received.

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate: O sons of our rebellious Islamic people, O Muslims wherever you may be, O free people of the world, our special sources have supplied us with the following information about the arrest of Grand Ayatollah [title as heard] Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i:

While the regime's forces were attacking the town of al-Kufah, a group of the al-Najaf revolutionaries raced to help and assist their brothers in al-Kufah. The enemy seized the chance to have helicopters carrying troops land on al-Sayyid al-Khu'i's residence, kidnap him and his son Muhammad Taqiy al-Khu'i, and take them to Baghadad.

Our sources added that popular resistance fighters continue to control the holy al-Najaf and that the Saddamists failed to enter the holy town. The sources added that the enemy's objective behind the arrest of al-Sayyid al-Khu'i is to weaken the resistance. But the resistance is growing stronger and has checked all of the enemy's attacks on al-Najaf and al-Kufah.

Greetings to our heroic revolutionaries in al-Kufah and to our kinfolk in all the rebellious Iraqi towns. Greetings to all of them [words indistinct].

Our special sources also reported that the town of Laylan in Karkuk [word indistinct] is now under the full control of the revolutionaries. Furthermore, the compounds of Fayiz 'Ali and [word indistinct] have been liberated. A number of tanks, artillery pieces, antiaircraft guns, mortars, and military cars were captured during the operation. Also, three air bases with several squadrons of fighter planes were seized.

Our sources went on to say that the Saddamist forces attacked the beseiged Tuz Kurmatu. Our heroic revolutionaries intercepted them with outstanding bravery and are hunting the fleeing remnants of the enemy who suffered utter defeat vis-a-vis the revolutionaries' steadfastness.

Help from God and a speedy victory. [part of a Koranic verse]

Son Interviewed on 'Sedition'

NC2103204091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1648 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Interview with Muhammad Taqiy al-Khu'i, son of Shiite Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i, with unidentified reporter; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] We are proud to meet with a respectable figure. He is Muhammad Taqiy al-Khu'i, son of His Eminence Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i. He will give his opinion and authoritative comment on the sabotage and looting the clique of sedition and crime has committed in holy al-Najaf, Karbala', and other secure cities of Iraq.

[Al-Khu'i] Thank you. In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [Words indistinct] my observations at this stage in particular [words indistinct] my relationship with my father [words indistinct] circumstances allowed me to leave my house only once. However, on this single occasion I saw acts that caused extreme pain and profound regret. I saw corpses in the streets. I saw buildings and offices set ablaze. I also saw looted and damaged shops. All these events and manifestations are very painful and regrettable.

[Reporter] Sir, in your view and based on your observations, what are this clique's real motives? How is this clique made up?

[Al-Khu'i] In my view, vandalism is generally caused by a feeling of impotency. A person who follows the mob must suffer from psychological deficiencies. Certainly, there are elements, motives, and leaders—if this the correct word to describe them—[word indistinct] who move people. However, many people are not smart enough, and they let their emotions drive them to follow those who tell them to carry out vandalism against public interests.

[Reporter] The mobs have stormed holy places in [words indistinct], al-Rawdatin, al-'Abbasiyah, and [word indistinct]. They [words indistinct]. What is Islam's ruling on this criminal act?

[Al-Khu'i] The sanctity of the holy places and mosques needs no explanation. These are places of worship in which the name of God is spoken. Places of worship must not be for purposes other than worshiping God Almighty. Any act contravening this is impermissible from a religious point of view. Anyone committing such an act will be doing something prohibited.

[Reporter] What is the Islamic judgment on the perpetrators of such acts that have actually been committed?

[Al-Khu'i] Frankly, as my father explained in his statement, such acts are definitely not permitted. There are religious rulings on such offenses. Of course, impermissible acts vary. A killer should be killed. But, for

example, a looter should be reprimanded, [word indistinct], or face what the ruler deems appropriate. Generally speaking, disrupting public order and confusing people is unacceptable and impermissible from a religious point of view.

[Reporter] Sir, you know that the acts of this clique were not confined to violating the sanctity of holy places, but also involved threats to the security of innocent citizens and their families. These acts also included looting public and private moneys, arson, and destruction. What is the judgment of Islam and Islamic law on this?

[Al-Khu'i] [Word indistinct] no particular judgment is specified regarding the violation of holy places. Although holy places have special sanctity, this does not mean that other places can be violated and raided, such as the homes of innocent citizens. If we say that storming holy places is impermissible, this does not mean that other acts against other places are permissible. Encroaching upon individuals is impermissible. This is as impermissible as violating holy places. Furthermore, encroaching upon people's honor and lives is more prohibited than violating holy places. Holy places, regardless of their holiness, are not more important than the lives of innocent people and the property of innocent people. Islamic law has shown great interest in people's property, honor, and lives. My father, may God preserve him, also called for an end to these acts and to the violation of people's sanctities, property, and honor.

[Reporter] Sir, in your assessment, what should we, and you as well, tell this misled clique and those involved in such acts?

[Al-Khu'i] As I explained, there must be leading figures who had a role in this matter. However, many uneducated people [words indistinct] must be guided and the truth must be revealed to them. Definitely, [words indistinct] the state and leadership will give them a chance to repent. Those who did not commit unforgivable crimes will definitely have a chance to repent. If truth is explained and revealed to them, they will come to their senses and preserve people's property and lives and their own as well.

[Reporter] [Words indistinct] you are welcome. Brothers, that was an interview with Muhammad Taqiy al-Khu'i, son of his Eminence Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i. He has given the judgment of Islamic law on the (?misled) and deviated clique that tampered with the security of the homeland and the citizenry. The peace and blessings of God be upon you.

UN Notified About Rioting, Food Shortage

'Aziz Sends Letter

NC2203091691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0750 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—Iraq has informed the UN secretary general and the president of the UN Security Council that its territory and people are being subjected to acts of rioting, killing, and destruction by armed gangs from a neighboring country.

Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, sent a letter to the UN officials the day before yesterday, drawing their attention to the fact that officials in that country have openly declared their sympathy with these aggressors' practices.

The following is the text of the letter:

Your Excellency, I have the honor to draw your attention and the attention of the members of the international community to the fact that, immediately following the declaration of the cessation of military operations by the U.S. and allied forces, large numbers of armed and organized gangs infiltrated Iraq from a neighboring state, as the president of the republic announced in his speech on 16 March 1991. These gangs committed acts of murder, destruction, arson, and looting in the Governorates of al-Basrah, Maysan, Dhi Qar, al-Qadisiyah, Karbala', al-Najaf, al-Muthanna, and Babil. Similar incidents occurred a few days later in the Governorates of al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and Dahuk.

The neighboring state from which these gangs came has not concealed its sympathy with the actions committed by these gangs in statements by its officials. These armed gangs have wreaked havoc on a large scale and have destroyed or looted hospitals, universities, schools, courts, food storehouses, state headquarters, and facilities used to provide public services such as electricity, water, fire fighting, and others. This is in addition to the large-scale destruction and plunder of houses, stores, cars, and other property belonging to the citizens.

The losses sustained by the state's institutions and the citizens as a result of these premeditated criminal acts total a very large amount. Furthermore, these criminal actions have created severe hardships and unhealthy conditions for several million Iraqis, who had already suffered greatly as a result of the military operations, as I indicated in my letter to Your Excellency on 3 March 1991.

We are sending this letter to notify you in general terms of the losses Iraq has sustained as a result of these premeditated acts of sabotage. We will in due course provide you with detailed information about these losses. Please accept my highest respect.

Representative Urges Ending Embargo

NC2203100691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0815 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] New York, 22 Mar (INA)—Iraq has informed the United Nations and the UN Security Council of the serious consequences to the life and [words indistinct] of the Iraqi people due to the acts of sabotage committed by gangs that have infiltrated from a neighboring state.

In a message he sent the day before yesterday, Iraq's permanent representative at the United Nations revealed to the UN secretary general and the UN Security Council president that these gangs have looted the contents of food stores in 12 governorates in the country's south, center, and north. These actions may cause the outbreak of an acute food crisis which will have grave consequences.

The text of the message follows:

Your excellency: At the instructions of my government, I have the honor to inform you that as a result of the acts of sabotage carried out by gangs that have infiltrated from a neighboring state, stores containing the people's food in the cities and villages of al-Basrah, Wasit, Maysan, Dhi Qar, al-Qadisiyah, al-Muthanna, al-Najaf, Karbala', and Babil have been looted. Similar actions by other gangs, which infiltrated from the same neighboring state, have taken place in the governorates of al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and Dahuk.

The looting of basic food stuffs and the destruction of state and private stores carried out by these gangs have caused a very acute food crisis, threatening to cause the gravest consequences in these 12 governorates, in which the majority of the Iraqi population lives.

This crisis demands that the Security Council take immediate measures to remove any form of embargo on food and supplies to Iraq so it can deal with this very serious crisis. The procedures used by the sanctions committee, which are slow, cannot provide an effective solution to this serious problem, which affects the human needs of the citizens.

I hope that your excellency will take urgent measures for the consideration of this issue by the council members. I also kindly request that this message be circulated as a Security Council document.

Please accept my respect.

Minister on Destruction of Food, Property

NC2103191991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1845 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Mar (INA)—Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih has said that the cost of foodstuffs and property damaged by agent saboteurs in the governorates is estimated at billions of dollars.

In an interview with Baghdad Television tonight, the minister said that the sugar that had been looted and destroyed amounted to well over 40,000 tons and that baby milk looted and destroyed exceeded 4,000 tons. He added that the mobs have looted and destroyed foodstuffs, clothing, and other various types of commodities, which are distributed among the citizens on a monthly basis in accordance with ration cards.

In the interview, the trade minister said that the acts of sabotage and devastation represent the third phase of the conspiracy against our people and country. The first phase was the economic blockade; the imperialist U.S.-Atlantic aggression against our country constituted the second phase, he added. The minister maintained that the principal objective of the conspiracy is to strike at Iraq from within, namely through the agents and mobs who carried out destruction and sabotage.

B'ath Party Official Visits Al-Kufah

NC2103200391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1933 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Al-Najaf, 21 Mar (INA)—'Abd-al-Hasan Zahi Fir'awn, member of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party Regional Command and secretary of the Euphrates Ba'th Party branch, and 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Duri, al-Najaf governor, have visited the al-Kufah District, Abu Sukhayr, and the (al-Mishkhab) Subdistrict. Fir'awn acquainted himself with the citizens' affairs. They expressed thier love for and pride in the wise and historic leadership of President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him. He called on the officials in the governorate to expedite work to provide all services to the citizens.

1,150 Kuwaiti Soldiers Freed; Many Still Detained

AU2103114791 Paris AFP in English 1132 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Geneva, March 21 (AFP)—Iraqi authorities on Thursday released a fresh group of 1,150 Kuwaiti prisoners-of-war, who were all soldiers, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] announced here.

The prisoners left the Iraqi town of Tikrit on a Red Cross bus convoy and will arrive late Thursday at Arar in Saudi Arabia, the town also used for the repatriation of Iraqi prisoners, he said.

On Wednesday, ICRC officials reported that 5,000 military and civilian Kuwaitis were still in the hands of the Iraqis following the ceasefire in the Gulf war.

Iraq some days ago repatriated 1,200 Kuwaitis.

"Our research office in Kuwait is still at work and we cannot rule out the possibility of discovering more Kuwaiti prisoners," the spokesman added.

Syria Urges Kurds, Shiites To Not Seek States

NC2103175491 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] An official Syrian source in Damascus who prefers anonymity has announced that Syria received pledges from the Kurds and from Iran not to seek the proclamation of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq or the establishment of a Shiite state in southern Iraq. The source said that the majority of the

international forces that the Security Council will deploy on the Iraq-Kuwait border will be formed from Syrian and Egyptian units.

Baghdad Papers Run 'First Accounts' of Turmoil

JN2203113091

[Editorial Report] Baghdad dailies, all in Arabic, on 17 March publish their first accounts and photographs of the rebellion in southern Iraq. Devoting two full pages to pictorial accounts of "death and destruction" in al-Hillah and Karbala', AL-THAWRAH cites Iraqi eyewitnesses on what "the murderers, saboteurs, and criminals" did. It also publishes pictures of dead bodies and destroyed buildings and vehicles under the following banner headlines: "AL-THAWRAH Shows Some of What the Criminal Murderers Left in Babylon and Karbala' Governorates," "This is What the Criminal Murderers Did in Al-Hillah," "Scenes of Destruction, Murder, and Looting are Everywhere in the City," "They Opened Fire and Threw Hand Grenades at Houses and Cars," "AL-THAWRAH Witnesses the Ugliest Crime the Agents of the Foreigner Perpetrated in the Holy City of Karbala'," "They Turned Holy Shrines and Mosques Into Arms Depots," "Killing and Slaughtering Children, Women, and Elderly People, Looting Houses, Shops, and Hotels," and "Vandalizing State Departments and Burning Civilian Archives and Documents." The paper cites Karbala' Governor Ghazi Muhammad al-Dirawi as saying that government buildings, shops, restaurants, streets, traffic lights, public libraries, silos, schools, police stations, civil defense centers, party headquarters, banks, and houses have been destroyed.

AL-JUMHURIYAH devotes only half a page to the scenes of destruction in Babylon and Karbala' Governorates, citing local inhabitants on the "ugly crimes" and "immoral acts" perpetrated by the "criminal saboteurs," and publishing a few photographs of destroyed buildings and cars. These are topped by three other photographs on the visit 'Izzat Ibrahim, Revolution Command Council vice chairman, paid to al-Ta'mim Governorate.

AL-QADISIYAH devotes its entire back page to this issue. Under the banner headlines "The Mobs Destroy the City of the Master of Martyrs [Karbala']," and "Vandalism Includes Hospitals, Civil Service Departments, and Citizens' Houses," the paper publishes 10 photographs of damaged buildings and cars. A headline cites the health minister as saying: "The Saboteurs Have Completed What the American Aggressors Have Started."

Unlike the other three dailies, the 17 March issue of AL-BA'TH makes no mention of the unrest, but, like the other papers, publishes the full text of President Saddam Husayn's speech of 16 March. A color picture of Saddam Husayn in his military uniform hugging two little girls covers two thirds of the first page. The paper's banner headlines read: "The Leader: We Have Destroyed the Sedition; A New Cabinet for Construction, Constitution, and Pluralism." The paper consists of four pages.

None of the Iraqi papers reports on the unrest in northern Iraq. They all report 'Izzat Ibrahim's visit to al-Ta'mim Governorate, referring to him as deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces when reporting his meeting with army commanders there.

The 19 March issues of AL-THAWRAH and AL-JUMHURIYAH cite eyewitness on what happened in Karbala', al-Basrah, Dhi Qar, and al-Najaf. Interviewed by AL-JUMHURIYAH, tribal chieftains of the northern Iraqi Governorate of Nineveh condemn the "criminal acts" and pledge loyalty to Saddam Husayn. No photographs of destruction in the north are published.

Opposition Radio on Successes Against Government

NC2103163991 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1442 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpts] According to the latest reports from the northern part of the country, our Kurdish revolutionaries have tightened their control over Karkuk, seizing the oil facilities, the airport, and the radio and television station.

Despite desperate attempts, the Saddam forces are said to have failed to regain control of the city. [passage omitted]

In other news, revolutionaries are continuing to tighten their grip over liberated areas. Our heroes have repelled attacks by Saddamists against 'Ali al-Gharbi and 'Ali al-Sharqi, and consolidated their control of the intersection on the road leading out from the two cities to Baghdad. Thus, all the supplies the murderers of Saddam might send to the southern areas are now at the mercy of the revolutionaries.

As the uprising continues, the rising masses have managed to evict remnants of the Republican Guard, some of whose units have joined the people, from the steadfast city of al-Kufah after engaging them in fierce battles. Massive demonstrations have swept the city against the regime of tyrant Saddam.

SANA Reports More Rebel Successes in North

NC2103184391 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1635 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus, 21 Mar (SANA)—Reports received from the Iraqi city of Karkuk affirm that the revolutionaries managed to capture an entire regiment affiliated with the Iraqi regime's Armed Forces. The regiment was entrusted with protecting the Karkuk Oil Company. Reports say that there have been continuous combing operations in the city to purge it of the remnants of the forces loyal to the Iraqi regime.

A statement issued by the office of Ayatollah al-Mudarrisi says that arrivals from Karkuk said that the Iraqi regime is using napalm bombs in the city to force the revolutionaries to withdraw and to halt their advance

toward other cities. This confirms that the revolutionaries are in control of this city and refutes the allegations by the Iraqi mass media, especially the one claiming that one of the regime's officials visited the city last Sunday.

The sources also affirmed that large numbers of central Euphrates tribesmen are heading toward the city of Karbala' to join the revolutionaries and enhance their defenses and steadfastness in the face of the military pressures of the forces loyal to the Iraqi regime.

Other reports affirm that as the revolutionaries continue their liberation and advance in northern Iraqi cities, the revolutionaries managed to capture approximately 20,000 security men and agent forces of the Iraqi regime in northern Iraq.

People fleeing to the Iranian border report that 16 army commanders in the cities of Kanar [name as received] and Kifri have joined the revolutionaries.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Democratic Youths Union issued an appeal yesterday calling for further cohesion and more blows to topple the bloody dictatorial regime in Baghdad.

The appeal urged the Iraqi youth, holding various political, cultural, religious, and national affiliations and in all positions, to join the Iraqi people's valiant uprising for the sake of a democratic and prosperous Iraq and a free, decent life in it, and in order to get rid of dictatorship and to save the people and the homeland.

The appeal added that in order to suppress the uprising the regime is practicing brutality using napalm, phosphorous, and chemical bombs, which are claiming the lives of thousands of the sons of the people of Iraq. The appeal says the regime does not hesitate to attack holy places in Karbala', holy al-Najaf, Khanaqin, Jalula', and other cities. The appeal adds that all these acts will only increase the Iraqi people's determination to topple the regime, break the shackles, and liberate the homeland from the claws of dictatorship.

Refugees Report Fighting 'Raging' in Al-Basrah

LD2103132391 Tehran IRNA in English 1159 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Mar. 21, IRNA—Clashes between Iraq's Republican Guard forces and the popular forces are still raging in al-Basrah and al-Tannumah, according to Iraqi refugees arriving in Iran Thursday.

Saleh Mahdi, one of these refugees, told IRNA that the Republican Guard forces had sustained great losses in their attempts to take control of al-Basrah.

He also claimed that many Iraqi soldiers had been either taken captive by the people or joined their rank voluntarily in al-Basrah. Mahdi said many civilians in villages of al-Basrah and al-Tannumah had been killed in attacks launched by government troops who he said used destructive arms.

But he believed that military attacks on villages and cities would never discourage the rising people from launching more protest demonstrations against Saddam Husayn and his regime.

Mohammad Osman, another refugee from al-Tannumah, said the city was still under the control of the popular forces. He also claimed that the Iraqi Republican Guard forces in their attacks on al-Tannumah, had executed and set fire to some people. He said there were many charred bodies lying here and there in the city.

Other Iraqi refugees arriving in Iran from al-'Amarah and al-Nasiriyah on Wednesday night said the two cities were also under the people's control and that many Iraqi soldiers and officers had joined the people.

They said the people were in control of al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, Karkuk and al-Mawsil in northern Iraq with heavy clashes raging on around these cities as well as in the suburbs and part of Baghdad, between the rising people and the government troops.

People Confronting 'Pockets of Sedition' in North

NC2203104591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—The AL-QADISIYAH and AL- JUMHURIYAH newspapers have voiced confidence in the ability of all sectors of our people to end the conspiracy to fragment Iraq from within in the same way they have foiled the Washington-led plot of fragmentation from outside. [passage omitted]

AL-JUMHURIYAH has linked the subversive acts launched by gangs that infiltrated from a neighboring state to the fact that U.S.-led coalition forces were compelled to halt their military aggression against Iraq.

In its editorial today, the paper says: When it announced its acceptance of the ill-reputed UN Security Council resolutions, Iraq tried to put an end to the conspiratorial scheme and not to give the enemies an excuse to implement their dirty divisionist scheme. But the enemies have resorted to a new way of conspiring against Iraq to spread havoc and fratricide among its sons. Thus, we can understand the meaning of the subversive acts carried out by the mobs in a number of Iraqi cities.

AL-JUMHURIYAH says the leadership's decisive position on the mobs' acts reflects its concern for the unity of Iraqi soil and its insistence on freeing Iraq from the ordeal of the aggressive war's consequences.

The paper hails the sincere nationalist efforts of all Iraqi people to crush what remains of the pockets of treachery and aggression. It says: Now that the acts of rioting and crime have ended in the cities of al-Basrah, al-Nasiriyah,

al-'Amarah, al-Hillah, Karbala', and al-Najaf the loyal sons of Iraq are now confronting the pockets of sedition that come across the borders to the northern part of the homeland.

Kurdish Leader Intends To Return From Exile 22 Mar

NC2203025091 Paris AFP in English 0222 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus, March 22 (AFP)—Jalal Talabani, leader of one of the two largest Iraqi Kurdish guerrilla groups, said he will return to his homeland Friday after three years in exile, and he reaffirmed he had no intention of forming an independent state in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Mr. Talabani, leader of the Kurdistan Patriotic Union, told SANA, the official news agency of Syria, that he had "absolute confidence in the effectiveness of the Kurdish resistance forces."

His statement highlighted the advances made by the Kurdish rebels in northeastern Iraq against the armed forces loyal to President Saddam Husayn.

He said his group had no intention of forming an independent state but was seeking to overthrow Mr. Saddam's government and replace it with a democratic coalition government in which it would participate.

The Kurdish leader, who was speaking from Damascus, said the 17 opposition groups that drafted a common position in November still agreed that no group should have a monopoly on power.

Mr. Talabani's optmism was reflected in a statement also issued late Thursday by a spokesman for a major Shiite Moslem resistance group, who claimed that 10 cities in southern Iraq were in the hands of "revolutionaries."

Bayan Jabir, of the Supreme Assembly for the Iraqi Islamic Revolution, said the cities included al-Nasiriyah and al-'Amarah. He added that the road linking Baghdad to al-Basrah, Iraq's second largest city and the largest in the south, had been taken by the rebels.

Mr. Jabir, who was also quoted by SANA, added that 15,000 people had been killed in the last four days in fighting in the holy city of al-Najaf, which lies 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of Baghdad.

In London, the BBC monitoring service quoted the Voice of the People of Kurdistan, a rebel radio station, as announcing that the rebels now fully controlled the oil-rich governorate of al-Tamim and its capital, Karkuk.

"The crucial battle of the Kurds and Kurdistan has been decisively settled," the radio said.

Refugees Report Regime Forces Using Napalm

NC2103183791 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1630 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Al-Hasakah, 21 Mar (SANA)—Iraqi brothers arriving at the al-Hawl camp in al-Hasakah today confirmed that the popular revolution is spreading toward areas still under the Iraqi regime's control, particularly Baghdad and al-Mawsil, which is the scene of large-scale popular demonstrations against the regime.

Interviewed by the delegation that visited the area with His Beatitude Bishop Cossidas Ohanian, patriarch of the al-Jazirah bishopric of the Armenian Orthodox Church, people arriving from Iraq said troops loyal to the regime have failed to curb the growing popular uprising despite the oppressive measures they are using against the masses. They asserted that the uprising, which embraces all classes in Iraq, is gaining strength day by day, and that the people are determined to overthrow the regime and rebuild Iraq so it can return to its position in the Arab and international arena.

New arrivals express concern at the ugly massacres the Iraqi regime is committing to curb the uprising. They said the regime's forces are bombarding Iraqi cities and killing thousands of unarmed civilians.

They added that the regime's forces recently escalated their attacks against cities in northern Iraq to regain control over them. Although various types of weapons, including the internationally prohibited napalm bomb, are being used in these attacks, the forces have so far failed to regain control of the cities, they said. [passage omitted]

Official Views Situation in Al-Najaf, Karbala'

NC2103175991 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1625 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus, 21 Mar (SANA)—A spokesman for the information bureau of the al-Da'wah Party in Iraq has stated that the towns of al-Najaf and Karbala' are still liberated and are still under the full control of the popular forces despite the Iraqi regime forces' attempts to advance.

The spokesman said that reports from the two towns refute the Iraqi regime's lies that Iraqi officials have visited the two towns. He added that the regime's repetitive reports on the visits are intended to distort facts. The spokesman went on to say that arrivals from southern Iraq have affirmed that the popular forces in al-Nasiriyah have succeeded in checking an offensive by the Iraqi regime's forces. The arrivals emphasized that the regime's forces used napalm bombs against residential areas and used helicopters to attack revolutionaries. They said that heavy casualties were inflicted on civilians.

In his statement, the al-Da'wah Party spokesman said the Iraqi regime has imposed an economic blockade on

all of the liberated towns, adding that all medical supplies arriving through the Red Cross are being distributed among the regime's forces and collaborators.

The spokesman said there are extensive exchanges between some of the popular revolution leaders and senior Iraqi officers, who voiced their full support for the revolution. However, these officers declined to declare their support publicly as a precaution against revenge by Saddam. The spokesman said the Iraqi officers are planning to support the revolution and eliminate the Iraqi regime.

Rebels Said To Reject Alleged U.S. Offer of Aid

PM2003151591 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Mar 91 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed report: "Shi'ites Reject U.S. Offers of Help Against Iraqi Regime"]

[Text] Indications have been growing of U.S. involvement in the attempt to partition Iraq and ignite the civil war there. Arab sources in Cairo have revealed to AL-SHA'B information about the U.S. role in the violent incidents taking place in Iraqi cities since a cease-fire was adopted in the Gulf war.

The sources said that the elements leading the Shiite rebellion in southern Iraq rejected a U.S. offer to supply them with arms and equipment. They also refused to cooperate with U.S. forces in Iraq to topple the Iraqi regime. And they ruled out any cooperation with what they called the external enemies of Islam, who were no less dangerous than those whom they called the internal enemies of Islam.

The U.S. Administration had requested its diplomatic missions in Beirut and Damascus to inform the Iraqi opposition leaders based there of its willingness to provide all assistance to them, both in terms of information about the size and movements of the Iraqi forces they were fighting and by providing aid to strengthen their control over the areas that they held.

Meanwhile Turkey had informed the U.S. Administration of its strong opposition to the provision of any aid to the Iraqi Kurds to establish an independent entity since, in the Turkish view, that would constitute a step toward polarizing the Kurds in Turkey to take a similar step.

Regarding internal events in Iraq, U.S. intelligence has denied rumors about the Iraqi forces' use of chemical weapons against the rebels.

People's Democratic Party Leader Interviewed

PM2103144491 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 19 Mar 91 p 3

[Unattributed interview with Sami 'Abd-al-Rahman, secretary general of the Iraqi People's Democratic Party, in Damascus; date not given]

[Excerpts] [SAWT AL-KUWAYT] How would you assess the Iraqi opposition conference held in Beirut recently?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I believe it is a unique and unprecedented event in Iraq's history. What makes it a historic conference is the fact that all the opposition forces attended and took part. True, the initiative and the call were for the Iraqi opposition's Joint Action Front, of which I am honored to be a member, but the response of all the parties makes that conference unique.

All the results of the conference focused on the common denominators of the opposition forces, and this is important, because these common denominators constitute the future program of the future Iraqi coalition government. [passage omitted]

[SAWT AL-KUWAYT] How do you see the true picture of the situation in northern and southern Iraq?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I believe that anyone wanting to win people's confidence must be objective. It used to be said that there was no Iraqi opposition. We rejected and continue to reject that claim, because we know that the opposition based abroad has its roots inside the country. This can no longer be disputed: The uprising now has a substantial presence in the north, south, and center, though to differing degrees.

In the North over 90 percent of Kurdistan is now considered liberated and now serves the Iraqi opposition. As for the south and the center, the uprising is continuing there. Al-Hillah, a central governorate 100 km from Baghdad, has now been liberated, along with all its towns, including Babil and al-Mahmudiyah. The opposition is now in control of Karbala' and al-Najaf. The state is unable to control the country as a whole, as it is being forced to withdraw its forces from one position in order to control another, thus enabling the people to seize the areas from which it has withdrawn its forces.

The uprising is still continuing and will not retreat or stop. And we will triumph in the end.

[SAWT AL-KUWAYT] In your view, what will be the status of future relations between Iraq and Kuwait after the Saddam regime's downfall?

['Abd-al-Rahman] We are bound to Kuwait by fraternal relations, just as we are to Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and so on. And relations of goodneighborliness, brotherhood, and cooperation must be maintained. If there are any problems, they can be negotiated. Border problems must be resolved, and ties of geographical neighborliness cannot be changed.

Our relations with Kuwait are not only goodneighbor relations, but fraternal relations, too. Kuwait has never been coveted by Iraq, nor will it be. Kuwait is rich in oil, but Iraq is rich in oil, water, and other resources. This proves that Iraq covets nothing in Kuwait.

[SAWT AL-KUWAYT] Do you believe there is any room for a dialogue between the international coalition and the Iraqi opposition?

['Abd-al-Rahman] We of the opposition regard ourselves as a shadow government. And I believe that the opposition should deal with all the states concerned with Iraq's and the region's affairs.

I personally headed the opposition delegation that met with British Minister of State Douglas Hogg. And in the past the United States has talked with opposition forces throughout the world, in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere. And we can talk with it, just as we talked with Britain.

We believe that such a dialogue is important, because it is a dialogue with a government or a principal part of a future government for Iraq.

[SAWT AL-KUWAYT] In his recent speech Saddam referred to neighboring states' interference in the uprising. What is your opinion?

['Abd-al-Rahman] That is very far from true. The uprising is of the kind which no country can interfere in or conduct. During its eight years of war with them Iran tried to urge the Iraqi people to rebel. Their economic and mental conditions were very difficult but they still did not rebel. But now the Iraqi people have been humiliated in a shameful way and the Iraqi Army has suffered a rout, which is why the wounded people must rise up against Saddam Husayn's regime, which has humiliated them and tarnished their dignity.

Damascus Declaration Assailed as Plot Against Arabs

NC2203121291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0945 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—AL-QADISIYAH characterizes the Damascus declaration—the result of the meeting of foreign ministers from the six Gulf states and the Egyptian and Syrian regimes—as another link in the chain of conspiracies against the Arab nation's present and future.

In today's commentary, entitled "The Damascus Declaration is Another Link in the Chain of Plots Against the Arab Nation," AL-QADISIYAH says that the United States prepared the atmosphere for this declaration and then immediately blessed it because it entails the establishment of a new security system for not only the Gulf region but also the entire Middle East region.

The paper says that after signing the declaration, the foreign ministers of the eight countries met with the U.S. secretary of state to receive his blessing and approval of the sinister declaration. This brings to mind what happened during World War I when Britain promised national independence to the Arabs if they allied with it. With the allied victory, however, Britain reneged on all its commitments and consolidated its colonization of the Arab homeland. It even issued the ominous Balfour Declaration in 1917 that provided for the establishment of a Zionist state in Palestine. It also signed the Sykes-Picot Treaty with France in 1916, according to which the Arab homeland was divided.

The paper notes that allying with the U.S. Administration will yield no benefit to any Arab country; on the contrary, such an alliance will rob it of its will and sovereignty. The best evidence of this is this administration's opposition to any UN resolution condemning the Zionist entity and granting the Palestinians their legitimate rights on their land. This administration even increased financial and economic aid to the Zionist entity, strengthened it with weapons, and gave it political support on all levels.

The paper notes that the aggression launched against Iraq is yet more proof of this protection because Iraq is the only Arab state that threatened Israel's security, existence, and being, and constituted a principal danger to it. Hence, the major plot, in cooperation with reactionary Arab states, was to strike at Iraq and destroy its military and economic foundations in order to prevent it from playing its real role in realizing the Arab nation's aspirations and its aim of liberating the Arab territories in Palestine.

Daily Says U.S. Wants 'Subordinate' Role for Arabs

NC2203112591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0909 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (INA)—AL-QADISIYAH newspaper stresses that the United States is eager to arrange and maintain its ties with the Middle East on the sole basis of linking the fate of this region with the U.S. Administration.

In an editorial entitled "The Region's Security and the Colonialism of the New World Order," the paper says that the secret of this relationship is primarily and basically built on the importance and vitality of U.S. strategic interests in this region and all over the world. This secret, it adds, is what prompts the United States to be more concerned about this vital region of the world than any other, because this region possesses all the strategic significance enjoyed by other vital regions of the world and stands out among all regions because it sits on a lake of oil.

The paper notes that all political circles and forums have no disagreement about the fact that what governs the United States re ationship with the Middle East region is U.S. strategic interests in the region and nothing else. The paper says that this fact does not only stem from Kissinger's famous principle: "There are no permanent friends or enemies, but there are permanent interests," but also from the history of U.S. political and military maneuvers in the Middle East and the world—maneuvers of forming political alliances and systems and military and security foundations and structures.

The paper adds that these consequent political and military U.S. measures have appeared in line with the famed American strategy of dominating the world and controlling its natural, economic, and political resources, and of attempting to mold the world on the American model and subjugating it to the U.S. Administration. The United States, the paper says, has made great efforts in Latin America, Europe, the Soviet Union, and in other parts of the world for the sake of this endeavor.

The paper points out that the new world order that America wants for the world is a vivid manifestation of this new and old attempt, for which the United States has and still is exerting enormous efforts and spending a lot of money.

The paper notes that its [America's] new plan to set up a new security order and organize the region politically and militarily is perhaps the final measure it wants to implement in order to complete the chain and structure of the new world order it has in mind for the world, in which Arabs are to be mere fluid in the beaker of this system, and will take on whatever shape it may be. They also want the Arabs to be a nation robbed of will, dignity, wealth, might, and ability to perform any genuine deed, except for acts subordinate to Ameirica's hegemony and which move in its new colonialist orbit.

'Mobs' and 'Allies' Trying To Fragment Country

NC2203140891 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1052 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] Ladies and gentlemen, it was no accident that the mob acts of rioting and the foreign elements' infiltration into the homeland coincided with the start and continuation of the 30-party aggression. This is because the objective and the scheme are the same, although there may be different roles and formulae.

It was no coincidence at all that the march by the mobs, the violent acts, the violation of sacred places, and the plunder of cities and villages at the hands of foreign elements coincided with the march of the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist-reactionary troops in the direction of our borders and territories.

Anyone who observed the events that took place in those days will clearly see the organic link and the coordination and cooperation between the two parties—the mobs and the allies—even in the timing of the march by those coming from the south and those coming from the east to meet and complement each other.

The Americans in particular were more eager to fragment Iraq from within and to adopt the age-old colonialist doctrine: divide and conquer. They were also eager to resort to their accumulated knowledge and previous experience in stirring up denominational and nationalist feuds to undermine the religious, social, and cultural diversity of the Iraqi society. Therefore, they made plans and spoke frankly about their intentions when they leaked reports, which they called secret and intelligence reports discussing the social structure in Iraq, particularly in the south, and how they should behave when their troops march to those areas. It seems that they found their old agents and their old means. They used the fifth column and took advantage of the intentions and objectives they share with that column, which itself harbors similar desires and rancors.

U.S. imperialism and neo- and old colonialism blames peoples and nations for the social facts and (?trends) that exist in the United States itself. The United States has never been a country made up of a single people, nationality, religion, or sect; rather, it is the most diversified country in the world in that respect. Furthermore, the national, religious, and sectarian oppression is present in its most flagrant forms in that country. In fact, aside from the Indians—America's indigenous population—there are no [indigenous] people of that country. The majority of the people there are immigrants who arrived in the continent in consecutive waves. Additionally, the imperialist U.S. system was principally based on expansion and occupation at the expense of neighboring American lands and peoples in the continent. This has made the United States three times as big as when it was first established.

These are (?firm) historical and geographical facts that no one can dispute. It is ironic that this is the same country that stirs up sectarian and ethnic problems and feuds in other countries. That is also what it seeks to do in Iraq. That is its wishful thinking and that of its fifth column. Iraq was never home to a single group, and it was never like the United States and its fifth column—without an identity, history, or genuine people. Neither has it seen nationalist or sectarian oppression of any kind or level. Thus, the United States' wager was lost from the beginning. The second episode of its aggression is not different from the first. They both lacked the conditions for success and were doomed to failure.

The two episodes of the aggression—the one related to launching the aggressive war against Iraq and the one which the mobs and saboteurs were charged with implementing—are alien to our homeland and people. They have the identity of the multifaceted foreign aggression against a genuine homeland and people—an aggression that the Iraqis resisted in the best way they could and in which they set the example and became a minaret for glory and a model for all peoples struggling to defend their sovereignty, freedom, unity, and pride.

We remind the gentlemen sitting behind their fancy desks in the Western capitals, as well as the group across the borders which is lying in wait for an evil opportunity and dark treachery, that the people of Iraq are not suited to these capitals' lost wager on division and fragmentation. We remind them that Iraq has never been and will never be a home to any (?rancorous gang). It will not be a laboratory for their evil experiments. It will not be another Lebanon [words indistinct]. Iraq has the seeds of

existence and fertility and all factors of power and unity. Unlike all these states, Iraq, throughout its history, [words indistinct] many invasions, occupations, and colonialist and rancorous attempts that tried to infringe on its unity and fragment its (?soil) and people. But they have all left, dragging their feet in failure and defeat. Iraq has remained standing with its (?diversified) social colors and structure intact.

Commentary Praises Diversity, Warns of Partition

NC2103201791 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 21 Mar 91

[From "Today's Talk"]

[Excerpts] Contrary to the wish of the Iraqi people, why have the slogans of sectarian sedition been raised? Why have these slogans infiltrated and insinuated themselves among the people now, exploiting the difficult circumstances and the country's preoccupation with confronting the 30-country aggression? Why was what they did to Lebanon and the Arab nation sufficient to carry out their atrocities on Iraq's territory?

The questions are many and commensurate in their extent with the conspiracy, the objectives against Iraq and the nation, and Iraq's ability to defend itself and the nation. Iraq can always make this defense. [passage omitted]

Iraq's [religious] diversity is centuries old. Various religions, sects, and creeds appeared in Iraq. This diversity interacted and harmonized to produce a civilized and historical belief in an Iraq that has a distinctive character and a vibrant life that enabled it to reemerge from the midst of numerous ordeals, dangers, and challenges.

Hence the Iraqis reject the slogans of sectarian sedition because they want a united Iraq that is larger than the share of it taken by any particular sect and stronger than any power that might be possessed by a part of the whole. [passage omitted]

As to why the unacceptable slogans have now insinuated themselves and raised their heads, this explains [words indistinct] that the 30-country aggression gave notice and established a beginning or a step that would be completed by the slogans themselves. To conclude, the goal behind the aggression was the aggression itself: Not Kuwait, not defending or protecting the Sa'ud family's rule, not international legitimacy and law. The target was Iraq—[word indistinct], the people, the glory, the leader, the revolution and its [word indistinct] principles, the Iraqi experience [words indistinct]. [passage omitted]

The question now is: Why are diversity and plurality in the United States desirable and a source of pride but evil, dangerous, and unusual among the Arabs? Why are diversity and plurality in the Arab sphere regarded as a sickness but considered healthy among the Americans? Why do they gather various kinds of people and turn the imported stranger into a constitutional citizen and then boastfully say this is America, while at the same time they want the Arabs who are united by blood kinship, ancestors, history, and society to be divided into two Arab groups, nay indeed, 22 [words indistinct]. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Baghdad Envoy on War, Aftermath

NC2103024991 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Mar 91 p 8

[Text] [Tawfiq 'Abid Writes:] "The facts that I am going to mention have not been reported by some sources, but I personally lived through them. I am not a spokesman for the Iraqi Government, but after my arrival in Amman from Baghdad a few days ago, I was faced with several illogical questions about what happened in the Gulf. These questions contained several fallacies as a result of the psychological and propaganda warfare conducted against Iraq, warfare to which the Jordanian street was exposed." Palestinian Ambassador to Baghdad 'Azzam al-Ahmad said this at the outset of a seminar entitled "Iraq's Steadfastness, Hostile Psychological and Propaganda Warfare, and the Prospects for Restoring Arab Rights," held at the Professional Unions Complex the day before yesterday, which was attended by over 2,000 citizens.

Al-Ahmad said that the Iraqi Army's main structure is still sound and that the intensive air raids failed to cause losses in its basic structure. Eight military divisions were on the Turkish border and did not take part in the war. Several other divisions were deployed along the Jordanian and Syrian borders to confront any Israeli or U.S. landing, along with other reserve troops, and are intact. There has been deliberate exaggeration of the number of Iraqi aircraft that took refuge in Iran. The number of these Sukhoi bombers is much less than reported. Iraq succeeded in concealing its aircraft in unusual places and in protecting them, despite the continued hostile aerial bombing. The missile launching pads are safe. He said that the Iraqi Air Force lost only 36 aircraft and retained approximately 432 fighter aircraft. Referring to the bombing of the Safwan area by B-52 aircraft, he said that an Iraqi Army engineering formation was subjected to heavy bombing for 45 minutes, but, because of strong fortifications, none of its personnel was hit except its commander, Hasan al-Sayyid, a Palestinian living in Iraq, who was martyred after returning from an inspection tour of the formation to his headquarters.

Al-Ahmad said that the most common question put to him concerned the Iraqi Air Force's failure to participate in the battle. He said that by striking at communications control and deactivating the radar posts, Western and U.S. technology succeeded in crippling the Iraqi Air Force. He said that all the hostile aircraft, totalling 93, which Iraq said it downed were shot down by conventional weapons and not by the advanced missiles in the possession of the Iraqi Army. He said that all the strategic study centers talked of the legend of the Iraqi

Army, which fought without air power. The Iraqi command remained in control despite the fact that bombs fell within a space of two meters.

He said: New methods were used in the war and new theories appeared, particularly the ability of the Air Force to help decide a ground battle. For this reason, the unholy alliance relied on continuous aerial bombing and poured down its hatred on civilian facilities such as factories, bridges, service centers, hospitals, schools, and transport and communication facilities. Not one Iraqi city or industrial installation was spared.

Al-Ahmad refuted U.S.-Western-Zionist alliance allegations saying that, while the Iraqi Army in Kuwait did not exceed 120,000 troops, the alliance spoke of 180,000 prisoners of war and 85,000 martyrs. He noted that the alliance later reduced these numbers. Al-Ahmad wondered: How and when did this happen? He noted that before their withdrawal, Iraqi forces fired 250,000 shells and rockets against the coalition forces until some of their field guns stopped working because their muzzles heated up.

He said: They are trying to destroy our will and force us to lose our self-confidence. He noted that the Iraqis will announce later the figures of their losses and the losses they inflicted on the coalition.

He added: When the United States felt that the Iraqi Army had not been affected, it concentrated its strikes on important points. I believe they succeeded in hitting the transport and communications facilities that the Iraqi forces had established.

He said: Iraq tried to draw them into a ground battle and an entire Iraqi division [as received] succeeded in infiltrating 20 km inside Saudi territory and occupying al-Khafji. The aim was not to occupy the city but to draw the coalition forces into a ground battle.

Al-Ahmad said: When the ground battles began on 23-24 February, the Iraqi 3d Army Corps launched a counteroffensive and succeeded in entering Saudi territory, leading the coalition forces to resort again to aerial bombing. In Kuwait, an Egyptian paratroop brigade, reinforced with U.S. commanding officers, was entirely exterminated. We contacted [the forces in] Kuwait directly and were assured that the Egyptian landing had failed.

He said: The United States is conducting misleading campaigns to make it appear as if Iraq had achieved nothing.

Concerning the ground battles in southern Iraq, al-Ahmad said: Iraqi forces succeeded in exterminating the attacking forces that tried to pursue the Iraqi Army. The Republican Guard launched an attack in which they succeeded in dividing the coalition forces in two. However, the cease-fire decision made by U.S. President Bush at 0200, and Iraq's acceptance of it gave the opportunity to a U.S. brigade belonging to the 82d Division to withdraw to a distance of 50 km from the al-Nasiriyah-al-Samawah road.

He said that the outcome of the tank battle, the organized Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, Iraq's success in preserving its military structure, and the bloody demonstrations in Egypt were the factors that forced President Bush to declare a cease-fire.

Referring to the al-Husayn missiles, al-Ahmad said they were manufactured completely in Iraq. He said they were neither a developed Scud nor a Soviet scud as the American and Zionist media claim in their attempts to discredit Iraqi industrial capability and expertise. He said Iraq's expertise and resources are still capable of proving Iraqi industrial prowess, and Iraq is relying on its own resources.

Concerning the removal of mass destruction weapons, al-Ahmad said the Iraqis are prepared for the comprehensive removal of mass destruction weapons from the region, including Israel, Turkey, and Iran, and the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from the Middle East.

Al-Ahmad said that 140 American pilots were killed in the Iraqi missile attack on the American barracks in al-Khubar. He said chemical weapons were not used because those who possess these weapons use them only in desperation, or to retaliate against a similar attack. He said Iraq did not reach that stage of despair despite 42 days of fierce aerial bombardment, and the Iraqi leadership remained cohesive and strong despite many painful blows.

On the Palestinian role in the Gulf crisis, al-Ahmad said: Palestinian political moves were fully coordinated with Iraq and that the PLO played a prominent role in conveying a French initiative to solve the crisis. France later abandoned the initiative under U.S. pressure. Soviet envoy Primakov's visit to Baghdad was made in response to a request from Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, Fatah Central Committee member, who was in the Soviet capital at the time.

Al-Ahmad noted that 'Arafat paid several visits to Baghdad, where he obtained a pledge from President Saddam Husayn to withdraw from Kuwait—a pledge similar to the one obtained by His Majesty King Husayn.

Al-Ahmad said: Palestinian forces under Iraqi command asked to participate in battle against the alliance near al-Nasiriyah, but the Iraqi forces turned down the request because there was no need for their participation. Palestinian forces fired dozens of missiles at Israel from southern Lebanon.

Al-Ahmad believes that Palestinian participation in the Gulf crisis was unique and that, had the Arab states that favored an Arab solution adopted a unified position, the PLO would have played a bigger role in cooperation with these states.

Al-Ahmad added that the PLO is being punished for its role in the Gulf crisis, saying that any attempt to find an

alternative leadership will fail because the PLO constitutes a common front for the Palestinian people and any leadership that deviates from the Palestine National Council will never last.

Regarding the riots in the south, he said: People who bet on Iran have lost. He said Iranian elements had infiltrated across the border and reached Baghdad, which posed a danger. Had Iraq not been able to preserve its Army, it would not have been able to eliminate the riots. He said: The riots in the southern part of Iraq have been dealt with completely. Anything said to the contrary is not true and is psychological warfare.

He said: I did not leave Baghdad until I made sure that Iraq was able to eliminate this rioting completely.

Mr. al-Ahmad swore before about 2000 people attending the seminar that Baghdad has so far not witnessed any demonstrations against the president or the Iraqi Government. He said the issue of the Kurds in the north is not very important and that there is common interest among Iran, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and the Soviet Union in preventing full independence for the Kurds. He said he was not worried about the situation.

In the seminar, he called for a strong stand alongside Iraq and to work to lift the economic and political siege. He also urged those Arab countries that rejected the aggression to unite and called for political language to confront this unholy alliance.

Mr. al-Ahmad reviewed the pressures applied by the United States and the West on Iraq. He referred to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly's visit to Baghdad earlier where he handed over a list of U.S. demands, which included decreasing the number of Iraqi Armed Forces to 250,000, to abandon the PLO, and to agree on a formula for settling the Palestine question in isolation from the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. However, Iraq rejected these conditions.

Regarding the situation of Palestinians in Kuwait, he said that our office there is open and that we are in contact with the International Red Cross and the Palestinian Red Crescent to follow events there.

He said that we have made progress, but there have been many excesses and the PLO has warned against any harm to the Palestinian community there.

Pharmacists' Doyen Mr. Taysir al-Humsi delivered a speech at the beginning of the seminar in which he welcomed the lecturer in the name of the Professional Unions' Council. He said our people in Iraq are suffering from the effects of the fierce aggressive onslaught by the group of 30, which left wide-scale destruction with the objective of fragmenting Iraq, ruining its national unity, and destroying the project for Arab liberation and awakening that the leadership in Iraq represents.

UN Official Warns of Epidemics, Hunger, Inflation

AU2003134791 Paris AFP in English 1323 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Geneva, March 20 (AFP) — Epidemics, shortages of food and fuel, and raging inflation are stalking Iraq where the structure of daily life has been ravaged by warfare, United Nations Undersecretary General Martti Ahtisaari said here on Wednesday [20 March].

Mr. Ahtisaari, who has spent a week in Iraq to assess the need for emergency help, was speaking during a halt on his way to New York to report to U.S. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and to the Security Council.

Reporting that owing to war damage the "situation is extremely difficult", he said that he had been unable to make a planned visit to Kuwait because of the disorganization confronting authorities.

He said: "Iraq is a fairly developed society, highly urbanized and very mechanized, so people are used to clean water, proper sanitation, and none of this is avilable."

The destruction of sewage systems, of water purification plants, and the lack of appropriate treatment products resulted in a threat of epidemics.

The danger was growing as summer approached in the absence of supplies of electricity to power refrigeration units.

Hunger was not evident. "This is not Ethiopia.... But inflation is horrendous. Even if there is a little bit (of food) available on the markets, as prices have gone up tremendously it makes it impossible for people to buy anything," he said

Mr. Ahtisaari, who met Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz, said that he had not seen any signs of civil war with Kurdish forces at Al-Mawsil in the north of the country, but reported that many troops could be seen in towns.

Mr. Ahtisaari, who is U.N. Deputy Secretary General, paid tribute to the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which had warned late Tuesday that Iraq was suffering from a severe shortage of food.

"We're trying to alert people to act fast... and make everybody aware of the necessary remedies," he said.

Aid would be provided by non-governmental organisations such as the ICRC and by the United Nations depending on the amount of finance from member states, he said.

His conclusions were in line with those of the World Health Organization and the UNICEF United Nations children's fund in February.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said here on Wednesday that since January

15 about 65,000 people had fled from Iraq and Kuwait to Iran, Jordan, Syria and Turkey.

When fighting began, most of the displaced persons arrived from third countries via Jordan, but later most of them were Iraqi nationals fleeing the war zone or civil unrest. Most of them headed for Iran where 30,000 people were assembled in camps, and for Turkey.

International Red Cross Sees Serious Food Shortages

AU2003083291 Paris AFP in English 2331 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Geneva, March 19 (AFP) — The entire population of Iraq is suffering from serious food shortages, the International Committee of the Red Cross said here Tuesday [19 March], calling for large-scale action.

The ICRC said that 900 tonnes of food aid had been delivered to Iraq since January, but it was now "urgent to carry out action on a larger scale in order to avoid a serious nutrition crisis."

The agency said it was stepping up its own efforts, and also coordinating them with the United Nations.

The ICRC statement, quoting the agency's teams inside Iraq, said that food shortages had been exacerbated by soaring prices for basic products, which ordinary people could not afford to buy.

Saddam Cables Tunisian President on National Day

NC2003120791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 Mar (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has sent a cable of greetings to Tunisian President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali on national day in the fraternal Tunisian republic. Following is the text of the cable:

Your Excellency Brother Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, president of the Tunisian republic: On the occasion of national day of the fraternal Tunisian republic, it gives me pleasure to send you our heartfelt greetings, wishing you good health and happiness and wishing the Tunisian people further progress and prosperity. We hope the fraternal relations linking our countries will continue to develop and flourish for the sake of our glorious Arab nation's wellbeing and esteem. Peace be on you.

Sudan Unable To Return Kuwaiti Gold Given By Iraq

PM2003142691 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 12 Mar 91 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Iraq Asks Sudan To Return Kuwaiti Gold"]

[Text] AL-AHRAM's representative has learned that the Iraqi Government has asked the Sudanese Government to return the 850 kg of Kuwaiti gold bullion which Iraq granted to Sudan out of appreciation for its position in support of Iraq, since Iraq must return everything that it stole from Kuwait, in implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

It seems that the Sudanese Government has disposed of the bullion and cannot return it to Iraq.

Olmert Says Would Not Change Remarks on Golan

TA2103155291 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1730 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Interview with Health Minister Ehud Olmert by Dan Margalit in the studio—live]

[Excerpt] [Margalit] Good evening, Minister.

[Olmert] Good evening.

[Margalit] There is no need to remind you what you said at the AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] conference. You said that Israel is ready to conduct negotiations with Syria over a variety of issues without preconditions, and that includes the subject of territory. Would you repeat this statement today?

[Olmert] I do not think I should change anything at all in my remarks. Everything I said seems reasonable and correct to me, as well as compatible with the government positions as I perceive them; it is also compatible with the position saying that we are ready to hold negotiations without preconditions.

[Margalit] But still, the prime minister's bureau said that you should not have said these things.

[Olmert] I have not heard that.

[Margalit] It was in a newspaper, which quoted [Prime Minister's Bureau Director] Yosi Ahime'ir, referring to him by name.

[Olmert] Okay, but I will say again: I have not heard that. I think that what I said at the AIPAC conference is appropriate and correct, and I have nothing to be sorry for. I think that from the viewpoint of approach to negotiations, my remarks reflect a correct stand. I would like to stress: When we talk about negotiations without preconditions, we mean that every side may raise its demands.

In this context, I would like to remind you that in the past, a Likud-led government announced its support for negotiations without preconditions with the Jordanian Government. At that time, there was a counterargument: How can we do that without preconditions? Are we not committed to the Camp David accords, which constitute our fundamental position? We replied: Let them say and argue what they wish, and we will respond at Camp David. I say now: The same applies to negotiations over the Golan Heights, in which each side will present its position.

[Margalit] I presume you will naturally support the Israeli stand—the Likud government's stand—that we must not abandon the Golan Heights, as the 1981 Golan Law stipulates. Do you believe, however, that there is room for bargaining on this issue, or will the negotiations be simply a casual exchange of remarks in which they will demand the Golan and we will say no, thus terminating the process?

[Olmert] Look, Dan, I do not think that, at this stage, we need to start speculating about how the negotiations will be conducted. When we sit down to the negotiating table, they will submit their demands, and we will find the right way to present our position. You were right about my basic stand, but there is no need to decide now on how the issues will be raised, and what we will reply, and how we will discuss the matters; this is what negotiations are for. We have been arguing for years about what we will say when they make demands, and how we should react when they make stipulations, and how we will respond when they argue, while all this time, there is no one to argue with or to make propositions to.

I think we would be wise if we followed a policy based on the creation of an international situation in which the other party feels obliged to sit down to the negotiating table. If it refuses, the international community, which does not like us, which has been impatient with us, and which would love to see us detaching ourselves from all the territories, would be forced to admit that our position is decent and sensible, and that the opposite party is trying to force us into an unreasonable settlement.

[Margalit] After the Syrians agree to security arrangements and the presence of a certain number of Jewish settlers in the Golan Heights, do you envisage a possibility according to which, at the end of the process, the Golan Heights territory will not be necessarily under Israeli sovereignty?

[Olmert] How can you expect me to envisage the end of the process when we have not launched it yet? This is precisely what I have been trying to....

[Margalit, interrupting] You must have a plan; this government, whose ministers have done some thinking, certainly has a plan.

[Olmert] Its ministers certainly think, but they should not discuss their every thought on television before negotiations are launched. This is what negotiations are for. When negotiations begin, we will definitely say what we think, but right now I am merely talking about how to start negotiations.

[Margalit] Meanwhile, Minister Sharon, for instance, has said that he will double the number of Jewish settlers in the Golan Heights. What is your opinion of such a declaration at the present stage of attempts to launch a political process?

[Olmert] I am always sorry about our practice of trumpeting our plans, thereby inviting a negative international reaction. And, in the end, all this trumpeting ends in very little action. In general, I am in favor of more action and less talk.

[Margalit] YEDI'OT AHARONOT reports today that you have defined Sharon's remarks about settlement in the Golan as a provocation.

[Olmert] I do not identify with these things. I mean, I do identify with the deeds themselves, but not with the need

to create provocation in the sense that, if Minister Olmert said in the United States that we are willing to enter negotiations without preconditions, then another minister is duty bound to appear in public and say that, not only are we unwilling, but we will do the opposite. This approach is unnecessarily provocative. If things need to be done, then we should do them, but if there is no need, why talk?

[Margalit] But perhaps you have indeed deviated from the line and misrepresented the government policy?

[Olmert] Judging by what I have been told, my remarks may have been presented in a wrong light here. Therefore, I will state at this point that I have never said that what I said were the prime minister's remarks. [passage omitted]

Olmert To Explain False Likud Financial Reports

TA2203084791 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 22 Mar 91 pp A1, 2

[Report by Eyal Erlich]

[Excerpt] Minister Ehud Olmert will soon be called in again for questioning by the Fraud Investigations Department concerning suspicions of criminal offenses carried out by the Likud treasury in the 1988 Knesset elections and the 1989 municipal elections.

A joint investigation team made up of members from the Israel Police, income tax, and value added tax [VAT] offices, reached the conclusion that Olmert signed false financial statements presented to the state comptroller after the elections. The big question the team is expected to answer is whether Olmert knew about the illegal activities conducted under his nose. During an earlier investigation in December 1989 Olmert claimed that he had no idea what was going on. The State Attorney's Office has now decided to order the police to interrogate Olmert once again on suspicion of falsifying a corporation document and of gaining something through fraudulent means.

Minister Olmert returned from abroad yesterday and this was his reaction: "I did not sign the financial reports of the Knesset elections because when they were presented I was forced to go abroad. Nevertheless, it is correct that I signed a letter accompanying the report to the state comptroller in which I wrote that to the best of my knowledge the report is correct. In retrospect, I admit that it was ill considered. I had full trust in Likud Comptroller Mordekhay Yahal. I never read the report and only signed the accompanying letter. In retrospect that was a mistake, but the report was rejected. In any case, I did not know exactly what was happening in the treasury. As Likud treasurer I had official responsibility, but I did not prepare the financial statements. In my view, there is no recommendation by any body to put me on trial. There are all sorts of ambitious people trying to frame me."

Sources close to the investigation told MA'ARIV that the illegal activities in the Likud treasury were conducted on at least two levels. On the one hand, the Likud tried to raise funds from companies contrary to the law on party funding, while bypassing the law on income tax and VAT. On the other hand, the Likud treasury diverted funds, transferred to it according to the law on party funding, from the supervision of the state comptroller by a series of fictitious deals with straw companies. Using those means the Likud withdrew from the state comptroller's supervision some 2 million shekels. [passage omitted]

Jerusalem Rejects King Husayn Proposal on Talks

TA2203100091 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 22 Mar 91 p 3

[Report by Pe'erli Shahar]

[Text] Jerusalem has totally rejected the proposal by King Husayn of Jordan to return to a discussion of the London agreement.

In an interview with U.S. television, Husayn said that he is ready to return to the negotiating table and renew the dialogue on the London accord. As will be recalled, the London accord was reached between Shim'on Peres and King Husayn and its existence almost brought about the government's downfall at the time.

Political sources in Jerusalem said that the London accord was never a basis for negotiations, was never brought up for discussion, and was therefore never approved. The sources added that, if Husayn wants negotiations with Israel he can come to direct negotiations based on our peace initiative.

It should nevertheless be pointed out that Jerusalem draws a certain satisfaction from Husayn's readiness to return to political talks, and finds evidence to back that in the monarch's latest statements. Jerusalem claims that by returning to the negotiating table the king wants to strengthen his position, which was destabilized by the Gulf war.

EC Envoy Sees No 'Arafat Role in Peace Process

TA2103190191 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] The 12-nation EC sees no role for PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat in the next round of Middle East peace efforts. This was announced by the community's Ambassador (Gwyn Morgan) at a news conference in Tel Aviv. (Morgan) said the Luxembourg presidency has made it clear that it did not envisage any situation where the EC would want to talk to 'Arafat.

Qatzav Terms Palestinian Autonomy 'Solution'

TA2203103291 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT (LESHABAT supplement) in Hebrew 22 Mar 91 pp 13, 19

[Interview with Transportation Minister Moshe Qatzav by Shim'on Schiffer; place, date not given]

[Excerpt] [Schiffer] If you were in a position to offer U.S. Secretary of State James Baker your own ideas for the promotion of the peace process, what would you suggest?

[Qatzav] We cannot ignore the government's commitment to its initiative. Nonetheless, I would focus on a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. I would include in it a solution to the Palestinian problem in Jordan and the implementation of full autonomy in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Right now I am prepared to explore arrangements that are not necessarily in the Likud platform. I do not care with whom I talk; the important thing is what we discuss. I will be ready to talk to any Arab on any solution to the Palestinian problem, except for a Palestinian state in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. No Arab is disqualified in my view. I will not reject a conference sponsored by the two superpowers, within the framework of which will be held direct negotiations between us and an Arab country.

[Schiffer] What do you think is the desirable solution to the Palestinian problem?

[Qatzav] I do not recognize the Palestinians' right to a national entity. If they decide to form that entity in Jordan, we should not stand in their way as we did in 1970. A Palestinian state in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip will prove a constant temptation for the Arabs to aspire to reach 'Akko, Yafo, Ramla, and Ashqelon. I belong to those who regard the autonomy as the permanent solution to the Palestinian problem.

[Schiffer] And you will be prepared to live as we do today, without a solution acceptable to the Palestinians?

[Qatzav] The situation at present is less dangerous than if a Palestinian state existed. Even if they come to me with promises that the Palestinians are ready to recognize Israel and maintain full economic relations with us, still I would object. Germany after World War I promised that it would disarm, and look what happened. Within a decade, it stuck a long tongue out at the whole world.

[Schiffer] So you do not trust the Palestinians?

[Qatzav] No. We have learned from the German experience.

[Schiffer] So you suggest that we continue to live by the sword?

[Qatzav] Progress should be made along two avenues: either in negotiations with Egypt through U.S. mediation to establish full autonomy; or in picking up where we left off, from the point which led to the downfall of the previous government, by leading to the election of the Palestinians from Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza who will agree to proceed toward self-rule. If they accept autonomy, I would be ready not to apply sovereignty to Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza.

[Schiffer] What would you do right now?

[Qatzav] The responsibility should be mutual. We cannot do anything unilaterally. The Arabs must accept one of the two options.

[Schiffer] Do you think the international community will accept a status quo in the region?

[Qatzav] If things depended on the international community, I do not know where we would be today. Israel may not have existed at all. The international community should be considered, but the final decision must be ours.

I do not argue with the various versions of Yosi Beilin [a dove from the Alignment] on whether or not we can live in peace with 'Arafat. It does not interest me at all. The main problem is 'Arafat's demand for a Palestinian state, which I regard as a threat to our existence. [passage omitted]

'No Point' Seen in New UN Envoy's Mission

TA2203072091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0700 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The UN secretary general last night appointed Edouard Brunner, a Swiss diplomat, as his special emissary to the Middle East according to Clause 3 of Security Council Resolution 242. Brunner thus replaces Swedish diplomat Gunnar Jarring who served in the post for 24 years.

Israel's response was to assert that it sees no point in the UN envoy's mission, as the U.S. secretary of state is currently undertaking precisely the same activity.

IDF Kills Two 'Terrorists' at Jordanian Border

TA2203061291 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0540 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpts] This report is just in. Two terrorists were killed before dawn this morning in a clash with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in the northern part of the Jordan Rift Valley. Our forces sustained no casualities. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports:

The clash took place at around 0330 this morning near Shadmot Mehola in the Jordan Rift Valley. The terrorists crossed the border fence and entered Israeli territory. They then opened fire at an IDF patrol. The soldiers returned fire and killed two. The IDF sustained no casualities, and the soldiers proceeded to comb the area. The terrorists were dressed in civilian clothes and armed with two Kalishnikov rifles, ammunition magazines, and other equipment.

Major General Dani Yatom, the commander of the Central Command, arrived on the scene and debriefed the troops. This morning's incident joins a series of incidents that took place this year along the border with Jordan. It should be noted that six heavily armed terrorists that had infiltrated from Jordan were killed last week on their way to perpetrate a terrorist attack in Israel. [passage omitted]

Defense sources reiterated that Israel regards Jordan as responsible for the terrorist infiltrations, adding that Israel expects Jordan to do everything to foil such attempts. Earlier this week, Defense Minister Moshe Arens said that Israel had sent messages to Jordan on this matter.

SLA Shells 'Terrorist' Targets in Lebanon

TA2103173091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] An SLA [South Lebanese Army] unit found and detonated two mines on a patrol road in the security zone's eastern sector in south Lebanon. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that as they were searching the area the SLA troops spotted a few suspicious figures, apparently the terrorists who had planted the mines. The SLA soldiers opened fire, and the figures were seen fleeing northward, outside the security zone.

For the past two days, the SLA has been shelling terrorist targets near the villages of al-Luwayza and Mlikh, north of the security zone. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht points out that Lebanese Army battalions are deployed in this area. Brigadier General Mikha Tamir, chief of the liaison unit with Lebanon, has said that the terrorists have been using the Lebanese Army positions to hide.

Two Prisoners Freed

TA2203091491 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0830 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Israel yesterday released two Palestinian terrorists that had been held in Israeli prisons.

Menahem Horowitz, our correspondent in the north, reports that the two men had been incarcerated for three years. One of them was arrested in the security zone in southern Lebanon while the other was captured on a boat transporting terrorists from Cyprus to Lebanon. The two men were taken to Lebanon through the Rosh Haniqra border pass.

Sharon: Settlements in Territories Promote Peace

TA2103183491 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1705 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Interview with Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon by political correspondent Arye Golan during a tour of Samaria on 21 March—recorded]

[Text] [Golan] Minister Sharon, do you plan to accelerate the pace of construction and settlement in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza now, of all times?

[Sharon] Ever since the first national government was set up by Mr. Begin in 1977, governments have been building there, and we are continuing that drive. At the moment, construction is perhaps more accelerated.

[Golan] As a result of Baker's visit, Bush's expected visit, and the expected political pressure from the United States?

[Sharon] As you can see here, construction is a continuous process which is not connected with any specific action or visit. It is, however, connected with the following two things: First of all, it has to do with a clearer vision of the importance of strategic depth, mainly in the wake of the recent war. At present, it is obvious that without strategic depth, Israel will be unable to survive, and therefore, the settlements here need to be strengthened. Naturally, political dangers have also accelerated the process.

The second reason is the constantly growing demand for housing here by Israelis—not immigrants, I stress.... [changes thought] Out of the 250,000 immigrants who arrived in the past 18 months, perhaps one percent reached Samaria. The rest are Israelis from central Israel, who may have decided in the wake of the missile attacks to leave the crowded areas and to settle in the high, open territory.

[Golan] How do you intend to foil what you have just termed political dangers?

[Sharon] I believe the term foil is incorrect. I believe the act of settling Samaria in accordance with the map decided by the government some 13 years ago promotes peace, rather than harms it. This settlement gives Israel a sense of security, and that includes the practical aspects of security. In my view, the stronger Israel's sense of security, the greater the possibilities to make progress toward peace.

[Reporting on the same tour, Jerusalem Domestic Service in English at 1800 GMT on 21 March, in a report by Jack Katzenell, adds: "Sharon said settlements were placed between the Arab towns of Qalqilyah, al-Tira, and al-Tayyibah to prevent them from merging into one town. Other settlements were aimed at retaining control of the high ground overlooking Tel Aviv and the other cities of the coastal plane."

[Asked about the reason for his worry "about the idea of elections here in the territories, or even negotiations with a specifically Palestinian delegation," Sharon replies: "Once you negotiate, or if you have elections here in the area, that immediately creates a separate identity, and that is how you start a Palestinian state. If you negotiate with a Palestinian state in Jordan, you do not create a second Palestinian state or a second Palestinian identity. But, if the government decides to proceed along its path

of autonomy or elections, then Israel will have to take security measures, or safety measures, of which I think the most important will be to annex the areas which are settled by Jews to Israel."]

Explains East Jerusalem Neighborhood

TA2203100891 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 22 Mar 91 p 1

[Report by Tzvi Gilat]

[Text] The Construction and Housing Ministry plans to set up a new Jewish neighborhood on the Mount of Olives east of the Intercontinental Hotel in East Jerusalem. Minister Ari'el Sharon explained that the ministry's policy is aimed at encircling Jerusalem with two belts of Jewish suburbs so that "in another 100 years the Jerusalem area will still have a Jewish majority." He said that the ministry's building plans are not aimed at settling Jews in areas with dense Arab populations but at expanding settlement along the main traffic routes.

Senior Ethiopian Official on Immigration Renewal

Calls State To Keep 'Promises'

TA2203072291 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The Jewish immigration from Ethiopia will resume the rate it had reached prior to the hiatus if Israel meets the procedural conditions set by Ethiopia. This statement was made by Kassa Kabedde, a senior advisor and close friend of Ethiopian leader Mengistu, who spoke with our correspondent 'Adi Talmor.

[Begin recording] [Kabedde] The Ethiopian Jews left for Israel according to the family reunification program. There was a short hiatus that resulted because the Israelis working on this program did not following the modalities [previous word in English] that we had agreed upon. We discussed the matter, and I believe that they will fulfill their promises to us and that the process of family reunification will be able to continue.

[Talmor] Will the process of family reunification continue at the rate it reached prior to the suspension?

[Kabedde] There is no reason that this should not happen if the Israelis keep their promises. [end recording]

200 Jews Arrive After Hiatus

TA2203083791 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0800 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The Jewish immigration from Ethiopia has picked up again. Approximately 200 immigrants came this morning on a flight to Israel after a three-week period in which no Ethiopian Jews arrived.

Uri Gordon, the head of the Jewish Agency's Absorption Department, said that approximately 400 Ethiopian Jews are expected to arrive in Israel next week.

Knesset Approves 66.5 Billion Shekel Budget

TA2103142191 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1400 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] A short while ago, the Knesset completed voting on the state budget, which was approved on the third reading. Our economic affairs correspondent Menahem Friedman reports that the budget, which is applicable up to the end of the year, stands at 66.5 billion shekels.

Knesset members had submitted hundreds of reservations on the budget law but all, save three, were defeated by the vote.

Poll Shows Arens Most Popular Minister

TA2103094391 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 21 Mar 91 p A2

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens is the most popular of the senior government ministers, while Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i is the least popular. This transpires from a nationwide PORI poll commissioned by MA'ARIV. Nearly 60 percent of the interviewees (58.9 percent) are satisfied with the defense minister's performance. This is the highest rating Arens has ever scored as defense minister.

On the other hand, Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i's popularity rating currently stands at only 20.4 percent. Some 42.9 percent are pleased with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir, compared with 49.8 percent last month. Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon enjoys a 39.8 percent popularity rating, a 9.8-percent drop compared with last month.

This month, 31.7 percent expressed their satisfaction with Foreign Minister David Levi; the percentage last month stood at 34.2 (a 2.5 percent drop). As for Industry and Trade Minister Moshe Nisim, 30.3 percent are pleased with his functioning now; 30 percent were pleased with him last month. The poll involved a representative cross-section consisting of 1,200 men and women above the age of 16, who were interviewed by telephone in their homes across the country.

Former Kakh Activist Forms Right-Wing Party

TA2103093791 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 21 Mar 91 p 3

[Report from Jerusalem by Yoram Levi]

[Text] A new right-wing political party called "Haderekh [The Path]—Jewish Grassroots Movement" was founded yesterday in Jerusalem. One of the movement's leaders is Yo'el Lerner, a former Kakh activist who served a five-year prison term during the 1970's for planning to blow up the Temple Mount mosques.

In a news conference in Jerusalem yesterday, the leaders of the new movement reported that they plan to run in the next Knesset elections if these are not moved forward. The movement's platform includes such ideas as expelling hostile elements, basing the Israeli legal system on Hebraic law, decreasing dependence on the United States, and drafting yeshiva students into the army. "Our goal is to fill the vacuum created by the national leadership," said Lerner. He emphasized that the new movement is not akin to Kakh.

According to Baraq Ben-'Amos, another movement leader, 480 active members and another 1,200 supporters have already registered.

Arab Detainees' Human Rights Reported Violated

TA2203110991 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Mar 91 p 24

[Report by Jon 'Immanu'el]

[Text] Physical abuse of Palestinian detainees suspected of minor offenses is, according to Betzelem, routine in Israeli prisons.

The human-rights information center issued a report yesterday which it said was based on interviews with 41 Palestinians who alleged they were tortured during investigation by the General Security Services during the past three years.

The Justice Ministry commented that the report lacked "complete and identifying details," to which it could respond, adding that when maltreatment was uncovered in the past, "significant criminal action was taken against the interrogators."

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman criticized Betzelem for releasing the report before allowing the authorities to see it. The IDF neither confirmed nor denied the use of torture, but said that in every case where a prisoner alleges the use of violence against him, there is an investigation of his claims.

The report's authors, Hebrew University criminologist Stanley Kohn and Betzelem staffer Dafna Golan, say they heard virtually identical accounts of maltreatment during interrogation, even though those interviewed differed widely in age, residence and charges against them, and came from 10 different prisons so the complainants could not all have been in communication with one another.

They demanded a full investigation, saying that five prisoners died during interrogation in 1988-89 and 13 more died in detention from various causes, compared with an average of two a year before the intifadah began 39 months ago. The Palestinians claimed they were subjected to severe beatings with fists, sticks and other instruments, deprivation of food and sleep, threats to harm family members, prolonged confinement in tiny refrigerated cells, being tied up in painful positions, having their heads covered with a sack, and being made to sit on wet floors for several hours.

Only 18 of the 41 were eventually tried, "all for light offenses." Five are awaiting trial, seven received administrative detention orders, and 11 were released without trial, Betzelem said. It said 16 of them required medical treatment.

Kohen said that "Only two or three of the 41 interviewed were even suspected of terrorism." He said there was "no correlation between the severity of the offense and the severity of the method. This indicates it is routine."

Nabulus Arab Stabs Man in Tel Aviv Suburb

TA2203054991 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Another terrorist stabbing and again in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area. A 24-year-old Bene Beraq man was stabbed in the back last night by an Arab from Nabulus. The victim was hospitalized and described in light to moderate condition. A suspect has been arrested. This as Police Minister Roni Milo and senior commanders have been meeting to introduce further restrictions on Arabs from the territories trying to enter Israel.

King on U.S. Congress Decision, Palestinians

NC2103223891 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn has said that the Palestinian issue cannot be resolved unless the Palestinian people are allowed to participate in the solution and to exercise their right to decide their own destiny on their own national soil.

In an interview with the American television network, NBC, carried today, his majesty said that Jordanians and Palestinians live as one family and work together for peace. As everyone well knows, we are one family here, he said.

He expressed his belief that unless the Palestinian people are involved, there will be no other way to resolve the Palestinian issue. He underlined the importance of allowing the Palestinians to express their view and contribute their share to peace. His majesty added: Only then can there be peace and stability in the region. We will support and work for this as best we can.

Asked whether Jordan would represent the Palestinians if it were asked to do so, his majesty said: We will not seek to represent them if we are asked to. However, he added, we agreed in 1985 that we might consider the matter if we are asked to do so. In other words, we may form a joint delegation that gives priority to the Palestinians to speak about the Palestinian-Israeli aspect of the problem. We can then discuss the Jordanian-Israeli aspect of the problem with all the parties concerned in the conflict.

Asked about the U.S. Congress decision to suspend economic and military assistance to Jordan because of its stand on the Gulf crisis, his majesty said: I regret to hear this news. I believe, however, there was a considerable misunderstanding of our position. Our position supported peace. It was a position calling for resolving the issue peacefully if possible. It was against Iraq's occupation and annexation of Kuwait. We have always agreed with the rest of the world in this. Therefore, I do not know how things took such a wrong direction. I hope, however, the picture will become clear.

Responding to a question on the future of Jordanian-U.S. relations, and the lukewarm state of these relations recently, his majesty said: I certainly hope the time will come when Jordanian-U.S. relations will improve and be built on a clear understanding of what had happened. Being old friends, we must indeed be frank with each other. I believe that we have been frank throughout the crisis. I hope our friends will understand in the future and that the dialogue between us will be resumed.

Answering a question on the misunderstanding of Jordan's position on the Gulf crisis and the differences among Arabs during the crisis, his majesty said: I believe that time will heal many wounds. As for the differences, they hurt us as much as they hurt them. When everything becomes clear in the end, however, I believe that they will realize that they wronged us and that we have always helped them in the Gulf region and the entire Arab world. We helped establish stability and achieve progress throughout the region and have worked for peace.

On his hopes for peace in the region, His Majesty King Husayn said: We will seize the opportunity when it comes. I have worked for this all my life. These efforts will culminate in contributing to a just and lasting peace in the region.

Editorial Says Policy Unaffected by U.S. Aid Ban

NC2203125991 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 22 Mar 91 p 1

[Editorial: "Barring Aid Will Not Weaken Our Will"]

[Text] Jordan's policy has never been offered to anyone as a price for obtaining aid or keeping it. Therefore, Jordan has never deviated from the course of its policy to gain a temporary profit or ward off a personal loss. On the contrary, its policy has been and continues to be based on this country's national and pan-Arab commitment, and on international laws and cultural trends to which it adheres. In light of this clear vision, Jordan has been able to pursue a responsible and rational policy, even under the most difficult circumstances and in the face of the fiercest challenges experienced by the region. It has also managed to deal with hardships and challenges in a serious and objective manner without abandoning any principle or bowing to blackmail.

There is no doubt that policymakers throughout the world realize this fact. We believe that the U.S. Senate's recent decision barring U.S. financial aid from Jordan because of its antiwar position in the Gulf is far from being objective and is closer to revenge and recklessness. Moreover, the decision will not get Jordan to abandon its principles and values, which it adheres to and according to which it acts responsibly, just as it did during the Gulf crisis. It seems that the U.S. senators have based their decision on a deliberate confusion between international legitimacy and foreign hegemony during that crisis, because they viewed Jordan's opposition of hegemony as a denial of that legitimacy, although Jordan has never taken any position denying legitimacy. Jordan was and still is eager to see the Arabs solve their problems by themselves, within the Arab framework and without the hegemony and interference of others.

What is important is to assert that Jordan will continue its positive performance in the region. Jordan unites rather than divides and builds rather than destroys, without being affected by negative practices, such as the decision to bar U.S. aid. Jordan will also remain committed to its pan-Arab policy and the human values which it takes pride in. Just as it was able to preserve its independent will and authority in confronting the unjust and illegitimate sanctions imposed on it during the Gulf crisis, this country will be able to preserve its independent will and authority despite the arbitrary U.S. Senate

decision, which is considered a link in the chain of premeditated and unjust sanctions from whose traces Jordan is still suffering.

King Congratulates Iranian President on New Year

NC2103155091 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1512 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Amman, 21 Mar (PETRA)—His Majesty King Husayn sent a cable today to His Excellency 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, congratulating him on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on the occasion of Nowruz. He wished his excellency health and success and continued progress and prosperity for the fraternal Iranian people.

Editorial Hails 'Very Positive' U.S. Statements

NC2103170791 Amman AKHBAR AL-USBU' in Arabic 21 Mar 91 p 1

[Editorial: "Arabs Accept New U.S. Position"]

[Text] We will put on record that the first required stance on the Middle East taken by the U.S. Administration has been its rejection of the Israeli decision to annex the Golan Heights and set up settlements in the Palestinian areas occupied in 1967. We say this despite the many reservations we have about American policy, which is biased toward Israel, and despite Washington's lack of serious positions on the peaceful efforts to settle the Middle East crisis. Nevertheless, it is not in our interest to ignore these current moves to push the peace march forward and proceed toward a just solution of the Palestine question.

We must interact with all international movements in general and the American ones in particular, and try to benefit from any step or move to introduce the Arab and Palestinian position in any solution or settlement reached.

The U.S. State Department's announcement that it does not recognize Israel's annexation of the Golan and opposes the establishment of settlements or their expansion in the occupied territories, is an important development in the U.S. position that took form following the Gulf crisis with the aim of settling the Middle East crisis on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

These statements are very positive. They give cause for optimism with regard to a possible practical American role to establish peace in the region, and allow the Palestinian people to practice their legitimate national rights and establish an independent state on their land which must be returned to them by ending the Israeli occupation.

Our interaction with these positive developments does not mean failing to be vigilant to or cautious about a setback to the U.S. endeavors to settle the Palestine question and end the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the same time, we should not allow any opportunity or initiative on the horizon to pass without seizing it and putting it at the service of the Palestine question and at the service of just peace in the region within the framework of a comprehensive settlement that entrenches security, stability, and peace for all.

Plane Attack Said To Violate 'Iraqi Sovereignty'

NC2103130191 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Mar 91 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Iraq's Unity Above all Considerations"]

[Text] The downing of an Iraqi military aircraft yesterday by U.S. aircraft is a vivid exemplification of the policy of power which evades all considerations, and a graphic example of the U.S. arrogance which has become a U.S. trend, not only against Iraq but against all world countries including those who were dragged behind it and stood by its side in the hostile oppressive war against Iraq.

The downing of an Iraqi aircraft flying in Iraq airspace is a flagrant proclamation of the hidden and proclaimed U.S. intentions against the unity of the Iraqi soil. The land of Iraq is facing at this stage a series of conspiracies that clearly aim at fragmenting and Lebanonizing it by dividing it into states torn by conflicting sects and ethnic groups.

Washington's concern to continue its presence in large parts of southern Iraq and its continuous interference against issuing a Security Council resolution on ending military action in the Gulf, are merely attempts to encourage and support breakaway movements in the south and north of the country, especally as all this is accompanied by maintaining the economic and trade embargo on the Iraqi people.

What is really regrettable is that the blatant U.S. violation of Iraqi sovereignty—and all this Atlantic threat to the unity of Iraqi territory—are carried out in the name of international legitimacy. This international legitimacy was merely a thin curtain which did not for a single day hide the heinous U.S. objectives against Iraq and the Gulf, or rather against the entire Arab nation.

What is even more regrettable is that, while the United States is supporting and encouraging the fragmentation and weakening of Iraq in the interest of neighboring countries which did not conceal their expansionist ambitions on Iraqi territory, all Arab countries remain absolutely silent toward this conspiracy. In fact, some Arab countries appear to be participating in the march to fragment and divide Iraq driven by petty hatreds and contingent circumstantial calculations.

It might be useful to remind those with weak memories that the call for liberating Kuwait by some Arab capitals might have taken place under the slogan of the joint Arab defense agreement. This makes us wonder bitterly whether the Arabs in turn are applying double standards,

like the United States, when the situation is related to Israel and its aggressive policy against the Palestinians and the Arabs themselves.

Conspiring against the unity of Iraqi land is an issue which the Arabs must tackle with a spirit of rising above trivialities and a deep feeling of historical responsibility that bypasses the fate of individuals and rulers, and rises above partial calculations and transient interests. Iraq's unity, which the United States, with some covetous regional powers are conspiring against, is something which must not be ignored or neglected regardless of the conflicts and the gap between the adversary capitals.

Editorial Warns Against Israeli Peace Agreements

NC2003023591 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 19 Mar 91 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "An Attempt To Broaden the Framework of the Camp David Accords"]

[Text] Despite repeated American and European statements about an appropriate and historic opportunity for a comprehensive solution to the Palestine question on the basis of Security Council resolutions and the principles of international legitimacy, Western diplomatic activity is still tied to the rock of the Israeli position, which insists on making peace agreements with the Arab states as a condition for making progress toward a solution to the Palestine question.

As part of its exposed maneuvers to undermine momentum in the international demand for a final solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute, Israel has announced a plan stressing the need to hold negotiations with each of the Arab states separately and to reach peace agreements with the Arab countries, along with the implementation of the Palestinian administrative self-rule plan.

There is no doubt that the Israeli plan, which has won the approval of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, is another attempt to broaden the framework of the famous Camp David accords to draw other Arab states into it. This framework has been rejected by the Arabs—leaders, peoples, and governments—as it involves relinquishment and unilateral action.

So, the new, but old Israeli maneuver is designed to achieve peace with the Arab countries and normalize relations with the neighboring countries, a move that will naturally weaken the Palestine question, isolate the Palestinian national struggle, and create the opportunity for imposing all the Israeli solutions on the Palestinians through Shamir's administrative self-rule plan, or through establishing a Palestinian canton under Israel's control.

Therefore, we warn the Arab brothers anew against falling into the trap of the Israeli maneuver, which is designed to enable Israel to exploit Arab weakness and fragmentation and dictate as many preconditions as possible before making any actual move toward solving the Palestine question, especially since the current international circumstances are appropriate for dictating and achieving such rejected conditions.

Thus, there is no way to repulse the dangers of this Israeli maneuver, which is completely in line with the American moves and the continued Western hints at the need for the Arabs to offer concessions to Israel in advance. We say there is no way to repulse these dangers without restoring Arab unity and returning to the pan-Arab solidarity policy in the face of foreign dangers that are coming unexpectedly, just as this nation does whenever it is exposed to serious challenges.

Paper Threatens Kuwait on 'Terror, Torture'

NC2003163191 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 20 Mar 91 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Why Do They Perpetrate Ugly Crimes Against Jordanians and Palestinians in Kuwait?"]

[Text] Kuwaiti practices and behavior can be understood or attributed to certain reasons and motives which may or may not be convincing. We fail to understand, however, the horrible practices and acts of terror, torture, and repression being committed against Jordanians and Palestinians whose efforts and hard work helped build Kuwait.

The campaigns of terror and the individual and collective killing of Jordanians and Palestinians, especially women, children, and the elderly, by Kuwaitis of Arab or non-Arab origin can never be understood by, justified, or explained even to enemies, let alone brothers.

All reports by foreign news agencies from their correspondents in Kuwait agree that Jordanians and Palestinians are being subjected to the ugliest barbaric torture at the hands of the Kuwaitis. Reports by the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International say that Jordanian and Palestinian nationals are being beaten, persecuted, expelled, and used for revenge. U.S. sources say that about 300 Palestinians have been executed by Kuwaiti Army members. The same sources say that torture used by the Kuwaiti soldiers includes beating with sticks, electric wires, guns, and iron rods, in addition to electric shock, and extinguishing cigarettes on sensitive parts of the body.

In addition to being disgraceful and cowardly, these barbaric crimes are a flagrant violation of human rights and international charters and norms. Jordan, therefore, as the foreign minister has said, might turn to the United Nations, after having informed the Kuwaiti ambassador in Amman of these ugly crimes by Kuwaiti soldiers and citizens, to possibly stop and curb this craziness.

Moreover, the PLO might resort to acts that could terrify the criminals and force them to stop such despicable action that contradicts Arab and Muslim cultural values and ideals. It is not courageous for Kuwaiti soldiers and

armed citizens to attack innocent unarmed Jordanian and Palestinian nationals who have played a great part in building and modernizing Kuwait.

If the criminals do not stop and if the Kuwaiti Government does not end such ugly crimes against Jordanians and Palestinians, then there are deterrent measures available to teach the criminals and those who back them the lesson they deserve.

We want to remind the Kuwaitis that Jordan embraced thousands of them and treated them as brothers should be treated, regardless of political or other differences, out of the belief in the principle that the Arab land is for all sons of Arabism from the east to the west of the homeland. The Jordanian Government and the Jordanian citizens extended the necessary facilities and treated the Kuwaiti nationals well during the Gulf crisis and war. They were not harmed by anyone.

We remind them of this noble Jordanian position that stems from the noble Arab characteristics, if they can remember.

British Council To Reopen, Resume Services

NC2003123091 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Mar 91 p 3

[Text] Amman—The British Council will reopen its library Saturday and resume its other services gradually, within the Ramadan schedule. The council was closed for the duration of the recent Gulf war.

Miles Roddis, the director of the British Council in Amman, said "there is no reason why we shouldn't resume a full programme but it will be modest because of Ramadan and then Easter."

Apart from the library, the British Council offers language courses in English and colloquial Arabic and organises lectures and video showings.

Three weeks of spring term were lost due to the closure, but it is hoped that these will be made up.

"We are hoping to complete the lost part of the term, but if we can't then we will reduce the fees for the next term to compensate for the money lost due to the curtailed term," explained Mr. Roddis.

Arab students studying English have had to suffer the inconvenience of the British Council beng shut but most have not lost out on work towards an important examination. The council offers the university of Cambridge first certificate in English for the highest level only. The majority of students range from beginners' level to intermediate.

The British Council remained closed after the Christmas holidays for security reasons. British members of staff were requested to leave on the advice of the British and Commonwealth Office in London and the British Embassy in Amman.

There will always be a threat (to security) even in the most normal times, but throughout this difficult period there was only one hoax telephone call and nothing else," said Mr. Roddis.

By the end of this week all the British Council's foreign staff will have returned from Britain. All staff were paid their regular wages during the closed period and none has found employment elsewhere.

Other cultural centers in Amman remained open throughout the Gulf crisis and the 42-day Gulf war. The French Cultural Centre did not close even though on the night of Jan. 30 its library was almost completely destroyed by a fire started by arson.

Further on Hizballah Hostage Release Statement

NC2203050391 Paris AFP in English 0436 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Beirut, March 22 (AFP)—The release of western hostages held in Lebanon is "directly linked" to the freeing of Arab "prisoners" being held in Israel and Europe, a spokesman for the pro-Iran Hizballah (Party of God) was quoted as saying Thursday.

In a statement reported by the local pro-fundamentalist news agency Al-Duwaliyah, a "reliable Hizballah source" said it was now "a well-known fact" that an end to the ordeal of the Western hostages "is directly linked to the freeing of prisoners and hostages being held by the Zionist enemy and by some western services, notably in Europe."

The source continued: "As a consequence, the release of the Western hostages depends uniquely on those parties who can put pressure on the Israeli enemy and the Western services."

But he repeated that Hizballah itself was not responsible for the hostage taking, and "those who are have claimed responsibility and issued communiques." [passage omitted]

Al-Khu'i Dictum Appoints Clergy To Administer Iraq

NC2103122091 Beirut AL-ANWAR in Arabic 18 Mar 91 p 1

[Text] On instructions from Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i, who resides in holy al-Najaf, the office of 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah in Beirut has distributed the text of a Shari'a dictum issued by al-Khu'i, the world's highest Shiite authority, appointing a higher committee of clergymen to supervise the administration of Iraq's affairs.

The statement released by 'Allamah Fadlallah's office said: Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i, the highest authority for the world's Shiite sect, has issued a shari'a decree from his headquarters in holy al-Najaf, appointing a higher committee to supervise Iraqi affairs.

The decree said: Considering the circumstances in which the Iraqi people are living during the continuing popular uprising in Iraq as the country passes a crucial phase—a phase that requires strengthening law and order, establishing security and stability, the supervision of general affairs and religious and social matters, and protecting public institutions from neglect and loss—we see that the public interest requires the appointment of a higher committee to supervise the running of Iraq's affairs. The committee members will represent our views, and whatever is approved by the committee will be regarded as having been approved by us. Therefore, we have chosen for this committee an elite group of eminent ulema, whose names are mentioned below, on whose competence and good management we rely. Our faithful sons shall follow them and obey their orders and guiding instructions and assist them in accomplishing this task. We implore God to grant them success to conduct a public service that will satisfy Almighty God and his Messenger. He is the Lord of success and best trustee.

The committee comprises the following: Muhyi-al-Din al-Faridi, 'Izz-al-Din bahr al-'Ulum, Muhammad Rida al-Musawi al-Khalkhali, Ja'far Bahr-al-'Ulum, Muhammad Rida Musawi al-Khurasani, Muhammad Salih 'Abd-al-Rasul al-Kharsan, Muhammd Taqiy al-Khu'i, and Shaykh Muhammad Rida Shabib al-Sa'idi.

Khu'i's Daughter, Fadlallah Assert Arrest

NC2103172791 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpts] The daughter of Ayatollah Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i has announced that the Iraqi president arrested her father and forced him to appear on Iraqi television for propaganda purposes. AFP cites Mariam al-Khu'i's interview today with the private British television network ITN. In the interview, Mariam says that Iraqi soldiers took her father against his will, and that the Iraqi authorities are humiliating him. [passage omitted]

Sahykh Muhammad Husayn asserted in a statement in Beirut earlier today that Ayatollah al-Khu'i—who appeared in a televised meeting with Saddam Husayn—is a prominent Iraqi man of religion. He said al-Khu'i was taken forcibly to that meeting.

Shaykh Fadlallah, who is considered al-Khu'i's representative in Lebanon, said the meeting was shown on Iraqi television to deceive people into believing that Ayatollah al-Khu'i supports the Iraqi regime. Shaykh Fadlallah said Imam al-Khu'i's life is endangered.

Islamic Party Calls on Muslims To Save Al-Khu'i

NC2203083191 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The Islamic al-Da'wah Party has appealed to all Muslims and free people in the world to act resolutely to save the life of Imam al-Khu'i. The party noted that the Saddam regime, which killed martyr Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his sister Bint-al-Huda and which has a history of criminal behavior against religious 'ulema, does not hesitate to kill anyone, whatever his position and status. The al-Da'wah Party called the international and humanitarian organizations to assume their responsibility and to pressure the Saddam regime to release Imam al-Khu'i and to stop the mass massacres it is committing against the rebellious Iraqi people.

Meanwhile, an Islamic al-Da'wah Party spokesman has stated that security disturbances and anarchy prevail in Baghdad. Violent demonstrations and clashes surface in one district after another in the city, particularly al-Thawrah, al-Shu'lah, and al-Kazimiyah. Fear that Baghdad may fall has prompted the authorities to impose a number of arbitrary measures.

Cabinet Holds 'Extraordinary Session' 20 Mar

Approves Militia Disbandment

NC2003152391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1415 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The Council of Ministers has decided to declare the disbandment of the militias. The council will meet in an extraordinary session in the near future to discuss the program to disband them because the committee concerned with this affair has not yet finished preparing its report. The Council of Ministers postponed three important plans that had been on the agenda: the militia disbandment, the election bill, the appointment of deputies [to vacant Chamber of Deputies seats], and the establishment of an economic and social council. These plans will be discussed at the earliest possible opportunity. They have been delivered to the ministers and will be studied within the next few days.

The Council of Ministers also formed four committees to discuss the implementation of the provisions of the al-Ta'if Agreement. The Council of Ministers lifted the wheat subsidy and transferred the funds that had been used for this purpose to development projects. It set the price of wheat at 100,000 Lebanese pounds for the ton. The Council of Ministers approved teachers' demands according to the agreement reached with the education minister.

President, Premier Speak

NC2103083991 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] The attempt to assassinate Defense Minister Engineer Michel al-Murr yesterday did not prevent the cabinet from holding its meeting in which Ministers George Sa'adah and Roger Dib participated for the first time.

At the outset of the meeting, President Ilyas al-Hirawi delivered a speech in which he denounced the attempt to assassinate the defense minister. He emphasized that the aim of the attempt was to obstruct the solution. He said: This makes us realize the enormity of the task placed on our shoulders during the present fateful circumstances, as we are proceeding along the path of ending the war and entering the phase of peace.

President al-Hirawi expressed regret over the death of innocent victims and offered his condolences to their families. He emphasized that the march is continuing and that the government is seeking to extricate Lebanon from the whirlpool of violence.

The president said: Such attempts have not surprised us. We realize that many difficulties will confront us during the transitional phase. These difficulties will only increase our resolve and determination to continue along the charted path until we achieve the desired goals.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Karami underlined the same concepts and welcomed Ministers Sa'adah and Dib into the government. He stressed that the cabinet is the normal and proper framework for remedying all disputes, achieving national reconciliation, and completing the implementation of the national accord document. He said that the government will continue to be committed to the clauses of the document and that consultations and dialogue outside the cabinet are necessary if that would facilitate the dialogue in the cabinet and lead to the achievement of firm decisions within the context of the accord document.

On his part, Minister al-Murr said: The attempt [on his life] targeted the peace and salvation process in Lebanon as much as it targeted me.

Minister Dib on Al-Ta'if Accord

NC2203091791 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Minister Roger Dib has emphasized that he represents the Lebanese Forces in the cabinet. He said: We agreed to find a solution to the militias when we approved the al-Ta'if agreement. We are serious about this and we want a mechanism and a program implemented to achieve it.

In an interview with AL-SAFIR, Dib added: We do not see the al-Ta'if agreement only as an agreement that dissolves the militias. The al-Ta'if agreement was reached to resolve the Lebanese problem, and the agreement has given every party in Lebanon part of what it wants. We are concerned about the balanced implementation of the agreement, whose text was balanced. This is a settlement agreement that constitutes the beginning of a solution that will take us from war to peace. Thanks be to God, the latest Cabinet session was responsive.

Government Asks 'Awn To Return $30 Million

NC2203093191 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Today's AL-SAFIR reports that the efforts to find an acceptable solution to Gen. Michel 'Awn's problem have been frustrated due to his refusal to return $30 million to the Lebanese Government. The paper cites informed sources as saying that the government believes the money was offered to Gen. 'Awn in his capacity as either head of the transition government or commander of the Army. Therefore, he has to return the money to the government or the Army. The money should not be kept as personal wealth because it belongs to the people.

Papers Assess UN-Based Middle East Settlement

NC1403115991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 14 Mar 91

[From the Press Review]

[Text] Under the headline "The Specific and Appropriate Vehicle," AL-THAWRAH says: Damascus of Arabism these days is the scene of an intensive, if not unique, political and diplomatic activity as, over the past two weeks, it has been daily receiving many prominent political figures and officials who are known for their effective roles and for their influence on regional and international developments. These meetings, and the detailed talks which take place within their framework, deal with future aspects of the present state of affairs following the catastrophic war the Iraqi ruler orchestrated through his occupation of Kuwait. These talks specifically deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the continuing aggression that this represents against the entire Arab nation. These talks also reaffirm the need to use the same yardstick with respect to international legitimacy to tackle all the problems of the region.

AL-THAWRAH says that Syria and all the Arabs who are loyal to their cause believe that the current stage the Arab region is passing through, particularly after the liberation of Kuwait, provides the best practical circumstances and much real potential to face up to and tackle all challenges, overcoming the most important obstacles, obstacles that are hampering security and stability in the region. This is necessary in order to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian cause.

The paper concludes by saying that no other means for the attainment of a peaceful settlement will lead to a just and comprehensive peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict except within the framework of an international conference on the basis of the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Under the headline "No Real Peace Without Justice," AL-BA'TH says: It is not strange for the region to be witnessing intensive political activity following the Gulf war and for various international parties to give special attention to the Middle East causes. It has been irrefutably ascertained that there can be no peace and stability for the international community without peace and stability in this region, and that this can materialize only through the settlement of the problems of the region justly and fairly, without bias or disregard for inalienable rights, and on the basis of the principles of the UN Charter and the UN resolutions known to all.

AL-BA'TH adds: It is only natural for the key to the region's security and stability to be the just settlement of the Palestinian cause. This just settlement can be attained only through the application of the resolutions of the United Nations which has come to enjoy new leverage after the Gulf crisis. It has also become more logical for the international organization to deal with all the region's problems in accordance with the same yardstick that will bring about just and comprehensive peace.

AL-BA'TH says that if the Gulf crisis has produced many realities, it has brought about a basic reality which is of special importance. This reality is the enhancement of the role of the United Nations and of the status of international legitimacy. When this legitimacy takes on all its dimensions in settling conflict in the region and elsewhere in accordance with the same approach and the same yardstick, it then represents a serious and effective vehicle for mapping out the world of tomorrow that will be based on justice, equality, respect for the interests of all, and security and stability for all.

The paper adds: It has been proven that there is no one in the world stabbing international legitimacy in the back and being diametrically in conflict with it as much as the Zionist entity. Even South Africa has demonstrated more than once that it complies with UN resolutions while the Tel Aviv rulers remain intransigent and continue to reject any resolution of the international organization. The paper says that the Zionist rulers' clinging to the dreams of partial deals and viewing them as the basis for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict will do them no good. It has been practically demonstrated that such deals have failed and are futile. Any solution that Israel seeks to attain on this basis will fail and will meet with a dead end because the solution cannot but be a comprehensive solution that will take into account the UN resolutions, particularly on the withdrawal of Israel from all of the occupied territories, and the securement of the Palestinian Arab people's inalienable rights.

AL-BA'TH concludes: We in Syria always welcome any international effort for a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in this region, based on our principles, rights, and national and pan-Arab interests which have never been in conflict with the principles and resolutions of international legitimacy nor with the march of the international community, which aspires to a world of peace, construction, and progress.

Reportage on Foreign Minister's Visit to Turkey

WA2003181591

For reportage on the visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs Faruq al-Shar' to Turkey, including reports on his talks with Turkish President Turgut Ozal and other high-ranking Turkish officials, please see the Turkey section of the 18 March West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Afghanistan

Najibullah's Speech on Regional, Foreign Issues

LD2003224791 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1630 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Speech delivered by President Najibullah on 20 March marking the New Year; place not given—recorded]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. Dear compatriots, sisters and brothers: [passage indistinct] We have instructed the government, after the beginning of the New Year, to dispatch delegations to the provinces so that they can resolve, at the local level, the problems besetting peasants and livestock breeders. The country's recovery is closely linked to the active participation of local opposition commanders in economic and production activities.

Local opposition commanders: Do not let the catastrophe of war continue to inflict damage on your locality. By utilizing your potential you can prepare the ground for economic activities that benefit your area [passage indistinct] received more damage as a result of the meaningless war is to be announced and recognized as an area of peace and cease-fire, and all should stop bringing weapons there. This region should be jointly administered for a short while on the basis of joint understanding. After this short period, an election should be held and an administration consisting of people's delegates be set up. In this zone of peace all belligerent parties, using whatever potential is available and by attracting assistance from international organizations, should endeavor to bring about the region's recovery. The positive experiences from such an example could be used and expanded in other regions of the country. Therefore, we are ready to create corridors of peace and joint security zones in some regions, thus providing a a breathing space for our war-torn people.

Refugee brothers, your return to the homeland is desired by all of us. To facilitate your return, the government is making and will contine to make all efforts. We are engaged in broadening the peace zones and your resettlement in those regions. The process of clearing mines from Afghan territory is continuing intensively to ensure your safe return. The villages, hamlets, and green fields on the side of mountains are waiting for you. I hope that in the New Year, which is full of blessings, you will return to your homes and your ancestral homeland and resume your daily life and work for the reconstruciton of the homeland. The Afghan Government will give all assistance needed in this endeavor.

Dear compatriots, based on the policy of national reconciliation to end the war and rebuild our destroyed country, the share of the private sector in the reconstruction and future development of our national economy is expanding. In line with the amendment to the Constitution last year, the ground is being prepared for all-around growth in the private sector, as well as productive and effective investments in agriculture, industries, mines, land and air transportation, commerce, banking, and other economic activities. The private sector can count on comprehensive protection by the government. The government is planning to review all its financial, banking, and commercial policies, including its foreign exchange policy, and remove various kinds of obstacles and bureaucratic and unnecessary restrictions concerning commercial dealings, domestic, and foreign private investments, custom regulations and the like. At present, the acceleration of relinquishing the ownership and sale of a number of government enterprises and institutions to the private sector, and the creation of private and mixed domestic and foreign banks, are also very important.

National and patriotic Afghan traders, by your active participation you will discharge your national and Islamic duty to the people and homeland by taking on active part in the country's revival through investing in commercial and productive areas. Simultaneously, we invite all Afghan entrepreneurs abroad to utilize, directly or through their representatives, the opportunities provided for private investments in various fields and to use their capital to help the country's economy.

Courageous defenders of the homeland, wherever you are, in cities or on the highways or in any other places, discharge fully your patriotic role in defending and safeguarding the security of the people, as well as the peaceful life of the people. The homeland will always keep alive the eternal names of its earnest and righteous defenders.

Pupils, students, teachers, and lecturers and all intellectuals, I speak to you. You have a formidable role for the restoration of peace and creation of feasible conditions for the reconstruction of the country. The people ask you to learn and discharge indefatigable work for the training and education of children and adolescents. With beginning of the New Year, the new academic year also begins. We are trying comprehensively to improve the condition of education and training this year and give specific assistance to schools and universities. We invite the writers, poets, journalists, and artists of the country to extend education activity and struggle to strengthen spirituality, understanding, and national reconciliation. The continuation of the policy of national reconciliation and achieving peace is not possible without participation of all country's intellectuals, irrespective of where they live. Dear compatriots, although we are facing massive socio-ecoomic problems along with the agonies stemming from the war, the task of restoration of peace and revival of the country require us to prepare the ground for the broad attraction of international cooperation. Moreover, the objectives of the policy of national reconciliation and the bitter experience of the past dictate that the government of the Republic of Afghanistan as an independent, Islamic, and nonaligned country, should work out in its foreign policy new principles of international relation with the neighboring countries, Islamic and nonaligned countries, and Western countries.

In the circumstances where international relations are moving from confrontation to cooperation we have extended the hand of friendship to all countries, and above all to neighboring countries.

Our compatriots know that, following our prediction of an attack by extremist opposition forces on a number of the country's cities, with the active and direct participation of military personnel of Pakistan, the city of Khowst has now come under attack. The defenders of Khowst are responding to the attack valiantly and with heads held high are engaged in repulsing the attack. We convey new year greetings to all units of the army, Sarandoy, and units of the state security and of the National Guard and to our brave and valiant airmen who are active in the defense of Khowst. Despite the state's proposed ceasefire to the opposition forces on the occasion of the blessed month of Ramadan, this barbaric attack cannot but insult the blessed month of Ramadan and the lofty values of Islam. The active participation of Pakistani military personnel in the attack clearly contradicts the recent statement of the Pakistani deputy minister of foreign affairs on the wish of that country for a peaceful resolving of the Afghan problems.

We hope that the line of realism and goodwill in Pakistan's policy toward Afghanistan will overcome the previously tested and futile acts. I would like, following my previous invitation, to appeal to the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Brothers, the time for hostilities has passed. A bitter lesson can be learned from the bitter past, and we should live with one another in peace and reconciliation, like brothers and good neighbors. In our opinion, there are many possibilities for the betterment and expansion of relations and cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in all respects.

Not only do we call on Pakistan for the beginning of a political dialogue, but we are also ready to talk with Pakistan about a specific program of economic and trade cooperation. Afghanistan could be a good transit route for the tranpsortation of Pakistan's goods to the West. The Republc of Afghanistan welcomes extensive investment by Pakistan, including exploitation of the great natural resources of our country on the basis of mutual cooperation and interests.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have traditionally been trade partners. We can begin the reciprocal export of goods that fill the two countries' needs, and also discuss economic and trade relations between the countries now and for the future through the formation of an association consisting of the owners of industries and commerce from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan could also have mutually beneficial economic relations through a regional organisation, including the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC. We want mutual relations between the two countries' parties, social organizations, circles and personalities and their parliaments and governments. As a first step, we could reach an agreement to hold a conference with representatives of main political parties, social organizations, and personalities of the two countries. Such a conference could be held in Kabul, Islamabad, or another place.

I repeat once again that we attach great importance to our relations with the brother country of the Islamic Republc of Iran, to which deep relations bind us. It can be noted with pleasure that as a result of the realistic policies of the two sides, our relations have emerged from the state of stagnation and have acquired a new momentum and expansion of relations and cooperation of the two countries. Right now in some fields this cooperation has started, and we are ready to study the deepening and expansion of cooperation at various levels and fields with our Iranian brothers. We believe that the ensuring of permanent contacts between the foreign ministries of both countries is necessary for consolidating and expanding our bilateral relations and for harmonizing positions of the two sides on regional and world problems. We propose that a joint commission of economic relations between the two countries consisting of state and private sector representatives should be set up for the expansion of cooperation. We believe the start of cooperation between border provinces of the two countries and border trade could play an effective role in the enhancement of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

Relations between the Republic of Afghanistan and its great neighbor, the PRC, are of much importance. For many years there was mutually beneficial cooperation between Afghanistan and China. But unfortunately for a while dark clouds overshadowed these relations. We believe those clouds have disappeared from the relations of the two countries, and conditions for the continuation of the traditional friendship and the revival of economic and technical cooperation between our countries is emerging. We believe that PRC as a great neighboring country could play an important role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the expansion of economic, trade, and cultural cooperation between the two countries. It will be useful if a commission made up of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of China were to be set up to assess the expansion of economic and trade relations and create a necessary basis for PRC investments in the Republic of Afghanistan. We ask the PRC to resume its economic and technical cooperation in the Republic of Afghanistan. Our state is ready to render all necessary cooperation in this respect and provide the requisite facilities. On this occasion I would like to express my gratitude and that of the Afghan people for the realistic stance of the PRC regarding the resolution of Afghanistan's problems and the ensuring of peace in our country. We believe that the PRC can and should play a more active and effective role in this respect.

The Republic of Turkey as a traditional friend of the people of Afghanistan has always enjoyed deep respect of

the people and governments of Afghanistan. With pleasure it can be noted that after a relative stagnation in the relations of the two countries, right now there is a suitable atmosphere for momentum in the relations of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Turkey. There are many resources for the expansion of cooperation between the two countries and studies in various fields. We have not forgotten that some sections of contemporary science have been started by Turkish scholars. A generation of physicians and Afghan officers were trained in Turkey.

On our part, we welcome the continuation of that tradition. Turkey, a country that enjoys a suitable economic capability, can play an effective role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and in investment in our country. In this connection, the establishment of a joint Afghan-Turkish cooperation commission composed of state and private sectors from the two countries will have a profound effect. Moreover, the possibilities of the establishment of cultural relations between the two countries widely exist. The establishment of Turkish language and literature departments at an Afghan university could be studied. We believe that Turkey, as a country which enjoys the trust of all involved sides in the reconcilition process in Afghanistan, can play a positive and active role in ensuring peace in Afghanistan and in establishing contacts and understanding. We have already approached the Republic of Turkey in this respect and we hope that our efforts have the desired results.

We are seriously trying to normalize relations with the United States as a great country and as one of the countries that has a fundamental role in the Afghan problem. But despite positive and realistic signs in the stance of that country toward Afghanistan, unfortunately previous policies still continue. The knowledge of the fact that the United States has bitter experiences of regional wars, chaos, and instability makes us optimistic that that country will review its position on Afghanistan and on restoring peace and stability to our country. [passage indistinct]

We follow similar principles in our relations with other European countries and with Germany, Japan, and Canada.

The long-lasting relations of Afghanistan with India are developing in a satisfactory manner and various fields of cooperation are being exploited. The regional and international credibility of India and its traditional friendship with Afghanistan could guarantee the accomplishment of a useful and effective role of India in resolving the Afghan issue and consolidation of regional peace and stability.

Our relations with the government and people of the Soviet Union enjoy a firm and traditional foundation. We are endeavoring to ensure that Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union become as mutually advantageous as in prewar years. The role of the Soviet Union in the restoration of peace for the people of Afghanistan as our neighbor, as well as one of the guarantors of the Geneva Accords, is of formidible importance. We express thanks for the assistance extended to the war-torn people of Afghanistan by the people and government of the Soviet Union.

Dear compatriots, concerning the political solution of the Afghan issue, a strange situation is evolving; I mean that on one side there is the government of the Republic of Afghanistan as a united and single entity, and on the other side a fragmented opposition. We desire that the United Nations, the United States, the USSR, and other relevant nations to gather all factions of the Afghan opposition into one side for talks with the government of Afghanistan to reach a broad national understanding for ending the war. In this way, the question of the political solution of the Afghan issue—the restoration of peace—could make progress and thus reach a conclusion.

Compatriots, we are hoping that this year will be the year of hopes and new [words indistinct]. During this year various new positive developments will begin. The inhabitants of cities will vote to elect the organs of local administration—that is, the municipalities—so let us take that as a good omen. We must make a comprehensive effort to ask Almighty God to make the 1990's a decade of the reconstruction, recovery, and progress of the broken economy of Afghanistan and a decade of prosperity for our Muslim and religious people. Let this be the year for the beginning of peace and the beginning of the reconstruction. Verily, success comes from God.

Battles Rage in Khowst; Scuds Fired From Kabul

BK2103103691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1014 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Kabul, March 21 (AFP)—Afghan Government forces and mujahidin guerrillas pursued the battle Thursday for control of the eastern border city of Khowst, officials here said. Substantive details such as casualties were unavailable on the fighting, which the Afghan Foreign Ministry described as fierce.

Transport aircraft made more than 50 trips from the capital Wednesday night, ferrying soldiers and military equipment to reinforce troops in the war zone who were trying to beat back the week-old mujahidin offensive, officials said.

Government forces fired Soviet-built Scud missiles from Kabul, targetting mujahidin positions in and around Khowst, while troops on the battlefront were being backed by air bombardment of guerrilla strongholds, the officials said.

Kabul Radio broadcast a stream of messages of support for the Khowst army garrison and the city's residents. Officials denied mujahidin claims that the old airport of Khowst had fallen into guerrilla hands.

The government of President Najibullah has charged that the mujahidin offensive involving 3,000 rebels had the active support of Pakistan, the main backer of the resistance. Foreign Ministry spokesman Humayun Muqammil alleged that Pakistan's regular troops and militiamen were participating in the fighting which began March 14 with rocket attacks on Khowst, some 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the Pakistani border.

He said Pakistan had also moved one armoured brigade, some artillery units and planes to the border.

Foreign Minister 'Abdul Wakil urged the United Nations in a message released here Wednesday to restrain Pakistan, which he said was violating the U.N. charter and international laws.

Simultaneously, President Najibullah urged Pakistan to "consider seriously taking steps to build a strong economic relationship between our two countries for the benefit of both." "The situation in the region and the world as a whole has changed," Mr. Najibullah said in a statement. "It has become favourable to political solutions of all problems. In this situation, it would be a pity if chances of an Afghan solution are missed because of increased intervention and rivalry," he added.

The mujahidin, which has been fighting for 12 years to topple the Soviet-backed government and establish Islamic rule in Afghanistan, has rejected a ceasefire announced by Kabul for the moslem holy month of Ramadan.

Khowst has been the target of several unsuccessful rebel offensives since the Soviet Union withdrew its forces from Afghanistan two years ago.

Bangladesh

Foreign Minister on Resolving Issues With India

BK2103162891 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman says the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] government will try to solve all outstanding problems with India through negotiations and discussion. Mr. Rahman was talking to newsmen after taking over charge of the ministry in Dhaka today.

On the sharing of Ganges water, the foreign minister said the government would like to restore the guarantee clause in the memorandum of understanding signed in 1988. He said efforts are on to send Bangladeshi nationals to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with the normalization of the situation in these countries.

Li Peng Congtratulates Khaleda Zia on Appointment

BK2103142891 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Chinese Premier Li Peng has warmly congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia on her appointment as the prime minister of Bangladesh. In a message to Begum Zia, the Chinese premier said the two countries enjoyed close friendship and their relations had been developing satisfactorily on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. [Words indistinct] that Bangladesh will develop continuously with her people living and working in peace. Mr. Li Peng expressed the hope that existing friendly relations between Bangladesh and China will be further consolidated and developed in the years to come.

India

Parties Attack Remarks of U.S Envoy to Pakistan

BK2203032491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The Congress-I and the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] have strongly objected to the reported statement by the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Robert Oakley, describing Kashmir as disputed territory. The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told reporters in New Delhi that Mr. Oakley has written a letter to a so-called Kashmiri American Council saying that Washington does not accept New Delhi stand on Kashmir. Rejecting the contention, Mr. Gadgil said it is beyond dispute that Kashmir is an integral part of India.

In his reaction, the CPI-M Politburo member, Mr. Harikrishan Singh Surjeet, charged the U.S. Administration with seeking to regain influence in South Asia exploiting local contradictions. He said the envoy's statement makes it clear that Washington has not given up its efforts to destabilize India.

U.S. Denies Change in Kashmir Policy

BK2203095091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The United States has denied any change in its policy of endorsing the Simla Agreement as the acceptable framework to sort out bilateral issues between India and Pakistan. The State Department officials told the ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL in Washington today that the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Robert Oakley's reported letter to the Kashmiri American Council does not represent any change in the U.S. policy. The officials said the UN resolutions on Kashmir were passed a long time back. Since then, the situation also changed between the two countries which later entered into the Simla Agreement in 1972. They said Mr. Oakley's letter clearly states this viewpoint.

Observers note that senior U.S. officials testified before a congressional committee last year that Washington

does not believe that the Kashmir problem can be resolved on the basis of UN resolutions. The American secretary of state, Mr. John Kelly [name and title as heard], in his testimony said that the UN resolution has become redundant and the more latest 1972 Simla Agreement between the two countries should form the basis of the solution to the bilateral problems. Meanwhile, an External Affairs Ministry spokesman said in New Delhi today that India is yet to see the authentic text of Mr. Oakley's reported letter to the Kashmiri council. In response to a question, he said New Delhi, however, notes that the U.S. Government recognizes the relevance of the Simla Agreement.

Spokesman Denies 36 Soldiers Killed in Kashmir

BK2103150891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] In Kashmir Valley, four subversives, including three Pakistan-trained militants, were arrested by the security forces and a large quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered from their possession. One terrorist and a woman were killed in cross-firing between the security forces and the terrorists in Baramulla and Kupwara Districts.

Meanwhile, an official spokesman has denied a report which appeared in a section of the press that 36 security personnel were killed during cross-fire at Ghulambagh and (Pandich).

Sikhs Meet Shekhar, Urge Punjab Elections

BK2203055891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] A delegation of the Sikh forum led by retired Leiutenant General J.S. Arora met the prime minister yesterday and urge him to hold the assembly elections in Punjab along with the Lok Sabha poll. They said any extension of President's Rule in the state will further alienate the people. The prime minister told the delegation that the situation in Punjab has shown some improvement during the last few months and efforts are on to improve it further so that elections in the state can be held. In a statement, the Delhi unit of Akali Dal-Badal criticized the stand of the Congress-I on elections in Punjab.

Three Ministers Resign From Haryana Cabinet

BK2203081491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Three Haryana ministers have resigned from the state cabinet and also from the assembly. They are the forest minister, Mr. Dharambir Singh; the sports minister, Mr. Nardev Singh; and the minister for technical education and electronics, Mr. Surendar Madan. Speaking to newsmen in New Delhi today, they said that they have resigned in protest against a reported move the change the leadership in Haryana. They said that they have submitted their resignations to the chief minister, Mr. Hukum Singh.

Finance Minister Says Import Ban 'Temporary'

BK2203092291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0814 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] New Delhi, March 22 (AFP)—Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha has reassured India's stunned industry that a clampdown on imports was only a temporary measure, which he defended by citing precarious foreign exchange reserves.

"It was mainly aimed at reducing imports during the next few months and once the government has sufficient foreign exchange reserves these measures could be withdrawn," Mr. Sinha told THE ECONOMIC TIMES in remarks published Friday.

Mr. Sinha, 52, agreed that the clampdown, amounting to a virtual ban on all but the most essential of imports, was harsh on India's import-intensive industry. "You need a bitter pill when a patient is dying," he said of the tightened foreign exchange controls. "It is a bitter pill, but it cannot be helped."

The Reserve Bank of India [RBI] Wednesday banned the free release of foreign exchange for the import of capital goods and slapped tough new restrictions on the import of industrial raw materials, components and consumer goods.

Analysts said the measures would hurt production in key sectors such as computers, consumer electronics, passenger cars, light commercial vehicles and petrochemicals, and lead to a decline in exports.

India's foreign exchange reserves are estimated at 2.4 billion dollars, barely enough to finance two months' imports, and are expected to worsen by May due to a delay in securing a loan from the International Monetary Fund.

The two-billion-dollar loan is expected to come through only after elections in May bring a new government with a full-fledged federal budget. Meanwhile the import cuts would give New Delhi breathing space to negotiate the credit. But industry continued to heap condemnation Friday on the RBI's directive, which an ECONOMIC TIMES editorial termed a "sledgehammer blow" of "unprecedented savagery."

"The hike is most ill-advised and will lead to a total collapse of exports," Sunder Vachani, managing director of Weston Electronics, said in a statement. "As a result of the stiff conditions on imports, export orders which have been already committed will not be implemented and these orders will lapse," he said. "Our image in the international market will be hit hard."

THE ECONOMIC TIMES said the clampdown would cause production to fall and result in a sharp price spiral as shortages bite.

Commentary Views Exports Performance, Potential

BK2103143891 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Commentary by Mahesh Prasad, PRESS TRUST OF INDIA economic correspondent]

[Text] India has over the years laid stressed in its economic policy on boosting exports with the ultimate aim of globalizing its economy and securing a competitive edge in particular fields. The need for modernizing its economy has, however, led to a faster growth in imports too, creating a balance of payments problem which turned critical in the wake of the Gulf crisis. The country achieved an impressive growth of 36.5 percent in exports in 1989-90. However, the growth rate declined in the first nine months of the current financial to 20.5 percent. The growth in imports is much higher at 28 percent resulting in a massive trade deficit of rupees 85,350 million in the nine months of 1990-91 as compared to rupees 77,300 million in the whole of 1989-90.

The Gulf crisis has brought to the fore the need for taking a fresh look at the strategies we have been pursuing for boosting our exports and the commodity basket and the direction of exports. A welcome aspect of India's exports in recent years is that the proportion of manufacturers in total exports has risen from 52.9 percent in 1970-71 to 73.4 percent in 1989-90. Exports of manufacturers at rupees 2,301 million contributred 76.8 percent to the total increase in exports during 1989-90. Substantial increases were recorded in respect of ready-made garments, engineering goods, gems and jewelry, chemicals and allied products, and leather and leather manufactures.

Regarding the direction of India's exports, it has broadly remained unchanged over the years, although there have been shifts at the margin between country groups. By and large the industrial market economies have been gaining ground both as markets for India's exports as well as sources of its imports. Oil exporting countries and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe have experienced some erosion of their shares in India's trade (?figures). The emergence of a single European Market, the unification of Germany, the introduction of market economy in the East European bloc and the constant pressure on import program necessitated by oil price fluctuations posed new challenges. These challenges could become new opportunities provided India could modernize its economy and acquire competitive edge in particular fields in which it decides to achieve a quantum jump in exports. For example, with the winding up of the COMECON, India could substitute the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a supplier of goods and raw materials. India could also cash in on the positive trading effects of the single European Market, sharpen its competitive edge in chosen fields and modify its standards in line with the European standard.

One of the countries with which India has not exploited the trade potential fully is Australia. Of late, Australia has been attaching great importance to its trade with India. This is amply evident from the report of the Senate Standing Committee on Australia-India trade and security relations. As a follow up of the report, Australia has in consultation with the Indian Government fixed a target of imports from India one percent of its total imports of engineering products. In pursuance of this decision, the market advisory service of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has spent a total of Australian dollars 300,000 on promoting Indian engineering products in Australia. Also, Australia has decided to arrange for the Indian Chemicals Export Promotion Council useful contacts with Australian importers. The two-way trade between India and Australia has been growing at the rate of 200 percent between 1983-84 and 1989-90. India's exports to Australia nearly doubled between 1986-87 to 1988-89 from rupees 1,460 million to 2,660 million. The two-way trade, which currently stands at U.S. dollar 800 million, will soon cross the U.S. one billion dollar mark. Besides, Australia, other markets in the region like New Zealand, could be exploited better.

BJP To Consider Establishing Ties With Israel

BK2203095291 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, has said that establishing diplomatic ties with Israel will be considered seriously by the party. Talking to newsmen at Hyderabad Airport, he said the manifesto committee of the party is now contemplating the question of having relations with Israel.

Mr. Advani said the BJP will adopt positive secularism, providing for equality and justice for all without discriminating on the basis of religion. At a meeting in Gulbarga, Karnataka, the BJP leader said that the party favors reservation for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and for the backward classes besides incorporation of economic criteria.

Iran

Leaders Deliver New Year Addresses

Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i

LD2103120191 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 0304 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Speech by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, on the occasion of Islamic New Year; place and date not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

I send my greetings to all our dear compatriots on the occasion of the New Year, especially to the exalted families of our dear martyrs and the selfless devotees and the respected families. [passage omitted]

We glance quickly at last year, which was full of adventures for the Islamic ummah, in the Persian Gulf and our region, as well as in other regions. It was a difficult year, especially for the Iraqi nation. And those events in total indicate how the Muslim nations, like all the weak nations of the Third World, need independence and freedom, do not need their fate to rest in the hands of ambitious and materialistic powers—those who do not think of anything else but their own interests. Those events were of course bitter ones. Yet they have left experiences for our nation and other Islamic nations and it is fitting that they should always be put to use. We must not forget those lessons.

With God's help, within the last year the rightfulness of the Iranian nation, in its many words and the issues it has had during the last ten years, became clear in world opinion. And the Iranian nation found that respect and eminence in the eyes of the people of the world which it deserved.

Internally, for our dear nation last year was full of events, including the very sad event of the earthquake in the north of the country and the floods in other parts of the country, including Sistan. We had [other] events such as these. Of course those were bitter and hard events, but even so they were an experience and a testing ground for the nation: how its efforts are helpful, how its cooperation with the government is healing. In those events, you, our dear nation, were able to do something unprecedented in our history through your assistance to the government and the stricken people in the country. We have seen many earthquakes, witnessed many natural events at close quarters in the past. An event as immense as the earthquake in the north has happened in the past as well, but never before were the [adverse] effects and ramifications of those bitter events alleviated with such speed as they were this time. Of course, there are many shortages in those areas, but what happened, from the improvement of affairs to assisting the quake-stricken people, housing and other improvements, were under the auspices of the people's cooperation and coordination with the government as well as the nation and government's great efforts in this regard.

Thanks be to God, in the year that has just ended, the government expended a great deal of effort in its program and policies. Undoubtedly that has had and will have positive effects in the lives of the people. Although we have a long road ahead of us, the government and the nation must advance hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder toward the lofy ideals of the revolution and the state and overcome the problems. [passage omitted]

'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani

LD2103122991 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 0316 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Speech by Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on the occasion of the Muslim New Year; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. May the New Year be auspicious to our dear and great nation, to the esteemed leader His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, and to all the noble and freedom-loving people of the world.

We begin the New Year's message by honoring the memory of His Holiness the Imam of the Ummah [Khomeyni], the great leader and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we honor the memory of the lofty martyrs of the revolution and the imposed war. We wish health and happiness to our dear selfless devotees [war disabled], our proud freed men [POW's], the dear families who were bereaved in the war and the families of the martyrs, the missing-in-action, the selfless devotees, and the freed men.

In order to present to our dear nation the issues that we are facing at the start of the New Year, it is better to look behind us first at the events of the past year. After that, on the basis of the understanding of our achievements, we can draw next year's tasks to the attention of our nation.

As a whole, last year was a successful year for our nation and our revolution, although our achievements are not free from mistakes and shortcomings. I present some points of our successes to our people. These are a reminder of their own success, as a New Year's gift.

In the cultural sphere our successes can be described as remarkable, and they include the freshness of the revolution; the preservation of our nation's revolutionary morale; the presence of our people in the arena; our desirable and close links with sincere Islamic forces all over the world; the good dynamism of universities and higher education and research institutes, both in qualitative in quantitative terms; the greater attention paid to the issue of education and training than in the past, particularly in rural areas; the construction of educational buildings; the favorable growth of the literacy campaign, for which this year's figure equals that of the past 10 years, covering about three million people; the greater attention to sports and arts; and the good trend in our media, including the Voice and Vision and the press. Despite these achievements in the cultural field, we are still a long way away from the objectives of the revolution.

In the social sphere, we have had positive points in the past year. Considering the security sphere, as you can see, the desired security is established all over the country and along the borders; and it can be seen that the people enjoy peace of mind in their political and social

life. Decisive actions were taken against those who were harming the people's health, that is, the drug traffickers. And thanks to the effective blows inflicted on them, there were fewer instances of smuggling, corruption, and hoarding, by creating a healthy situation for trade and commerce.

[Other steps taken include:] The attention given to the victims of natural disasters, including the earthquake and several instances of flooding, which created difficulties for some sections of our people last year; the prompt response of officials, the Interior Ministry, the governors-general of the assisting provinces, the people, and the Red Crescent, which attracted the admiration of international observers; and the relative cooperation of the international organizations in the relief works, the attention given to hygiene matters in rural areas, the expansion of rural cooperatives, the attention paid to the issue of medicine which has improved compared to the past, and other similar achievements.

The other issue is foreign policy, in which we achieved considerable successes, and some of which had cultural aspects. [sentence as heard] As our people can see, the conspiracy of Islam's enemies, who intended to depict our revolution as a harsh movement relying on club-wielding bullies, was foiled; and now the revolution's pleasant and moderate face is raised in the world with clear logic and distinguished and revolutionary aspirations. This is what we and our imam of the ummah desired, but the false propaganda of our enemies was an obstacle. Thanks to the wise policy which was adopted last year, the arrows fired by our enemies hit a stone.

[Other achievements last year include] Our serious and effective presence in the international organizations and global forums; the presentation of our revolution as a rational movement in the world; the removal of indignation and unnecessary problems which have strained our ties with some foreign countries whereby we have strengthened and improved relations in each case that we deemed expedient; the wise and prudent approach that we adopted, on the basis of guidance of the esteemed leader of the revolution, regarding sensitive international and regional problems, particularly in connection with the Persian Gulf issue where the Islamic Republic chose a proper, logical, Islamic, and humanitarian policy which was acceptable to our own nation and ummah and also attracted the attention of others; the proper and serious approach to [UN] Resolution 598 as our nation saw the lost territories returned. A large number of our POW's returned home proudly and joined the embrace of their families; and we forced the enemy to concede, and we realized the victory that the imam of the ummah desired, and eventually the world admitted that Iran was victorious in the imposed war. This is particularly valuable because they tried for years to depict us as unjust. But at this juncture, thanks to the accurate cultural and diplomatic approach of our relevent officials, most of the world's media confessed that our stance in the war was justified and the path we had chosen in our defense was right.

In the economic field, the arena is much wider than I have mentioned above. I only made a brief reference here. As a whole, we managed to implement the [five-year economic] plan well. In the past it was said that the plan was too ambitious. Nevertheless, in many instances we even exceeded the plan. In the manufacturing field, we are ahead of the plan. We are ahead in providing the financial resources, so much so that the budget deficit for the year which has just ended, and for the coming year, 1370, is considerably less than the plan had predicted. We halted the growth in money supply, which was growing like a cancer in our country. The banks have attracted a considerable amount of savings. The people's trust in the banks was strengthened, and investment grew. Inflation, which was very high and was growing unbridled, came under control. I am not saying that inflation was eliminated, rather that it was harnessed; it came down from 20 and 30 percent to something less than 10 percent. It is on the right course now, and that is better than the plan had predicted.

Investment is relatively good. Exports are showing considerable growth, thanks to the obstacles we removed during the latter days of the year. The production of consumer goods is at a relatively desirable level, to the extent that it is no longer beneficial to anyone as it was before. Consumers have a choice in most instances, although there are bottlenecks in some instances. In the past it was always the retailer who dictated the terms, but now the consumers have a choice to some extent.

Most of the factories, which were stagnant, are active now. These include both heavy and light industries. The production and distribution of building materials is good. Although the desired state of plenty has not yet been realized, as you can see we are no longer facing a black market. Praise be to God, our surplus cement production totals several million tonnes. It is the same for most domestically produced items, including steel, copper, and aluminium. We have reached saturation point in the plastics manufacturing sector.

Implementation of the country's important projects was accelerated, so much so that some projects reached production stage before the deadline; and some are close to the production phase. Taxes were collected up to the level envisioned in the plan. Oil products were refined and sold at reasonable prices all through the year. That is, they were produced at an appropriate level and sold at the appropriate price. Our banking credits increased all over the world. The bank succeeded in controlling the foreign currency [exchanging values]. We are moving toward a unified foreign currency rate, but we have not reached it yet. The stock exchange was more active.

Our military industries have had good growth. Our telecommunication industries also have had healthy growth. The process of expanding the piped gas network has accelerated remarkably. The only problem the people face in this field today is the purchase of valves

and taps. This is because of the speed with which gas is piped to the people's homes in many cities and rural areas.

Agriculture is in an acceptable situation. Production is better than before and the future is brighter. We have reached self-sufficiency in the production of nitrogen fertilizer. We produce almost 40 percent of our requirements for phosphorous fertilizer. The huge petrochemical plant reached the production stage, its first stage began. [sentence as heard] Several dams are under construction. A large number of power stations are either being designed or under construction, which will enable us to solve the problem of energy shortages in the future. There are many other achievements that I cannot recall now, but the people have been informed of them throughout the year. God willing, this process will continue.

In the administrative sector, we organized the supreme administrative council; and steps have been taken toward administrative reforms. The customs service is much more active and faster than before. The state registration and documentation offices and the municipalties have become very active, particularly the City of Tehran. There are some obstacles in the field of transportation, but we have removed them to some extent. Although we have not managed to bring into action a large number of vehicles, still we have increased our [road] haulage capacity by 23 percent. This is a very desirable figure. The ports have become more active. The transit silo of Imam's Port is operational and has facilitated many tasks. We have very good facilities for storing essential goods now, thanks to the better situation of transportation. The railway network has beome more active, thanks to the work done to remove its shortages. We have more hope for its future.

The plan for the merger of the security forces has gone through good stages and is now nearly completed. The ministries of defense and the Islamic Guard Corps have been merged and are now working with better formation and good centralization. The problems which existed between the ministries of agriculture and construction jihad, as their tasks overlapped, were solved and their duties were separated. The Supreme Administrative Council meets regularly in order to find and resolve administrative problems.

This has been a relatively vague and small list of last year's achievements. Of course there were some weak points. We accept that some of the promises were not honored. This is because of the bottlenecks which remain. We are ready to accept criticism, particularly from those who criticize with good intention and a desire to improve matters. We are also prepared to tolerate the unfriendly stings that our (?enemies) usually direct against us. The sacred path of reaching the desired goal cannot be without thorns. Officials in various departments should prepare themselves to endure difficulties along this long road which lies ahead of us.

In performing these tasks, we have enjoyed the support of all establishments, and above all we have enjoyed the unstinting support and effective guidance of the esteemed leader. We have enjoyed the Islamic Majles' favorable support and timely ratification of the budget and plan; and we have enjoyed the effective support of the judicial power and other supportive bodies. They all contributed to our work.

As to the future, we plan to continue last year's successful policies. We will implement the [five-year] plan with greater dynamism in the areas which require greater dynamism. Here I mention some of the priorities: For instance, we are facing difficulty in the provision of construction materials. We must pay greater attention to this. Our transportation faces difficulties. Our provisions this year will influence next year's achievements. A large number of trucks are either being manufactured or imported. A large number of freight cars and locomotives have been ordered to create movement in the railways. The housing sector has prepared itself for the future, to supply 500,000 residential units to the people in the coming two or three years. All of this has been announced.

One of our priorities is to pay attention to the revolutionary establishments which are the supporters of the governments and the backing force in the deprived regions of our country. These include the Selfless Devotees Foundation, the Martyr's Foundation, the Imam's Relief Committee, the headquarters in charge of the affairs of released POW's, the Housing Foundation of the Revolution, and other similar organs. They are all included in the plan for the attention of the state authorities, to enable them to perform their tasks properly. The families of the martyrs and the selfless devotees have a special place in the provision of schools, universities, and training institutions.

The labor law came into effect and was implemented, praise be to God. The Labor Ministry was very active in technical training. The Education Ministry was also active. The Labor Ministry will be one of the priorities in the coming year. One of the serious shortages in the country's reconstruction is shortage of skilled manpower. We should train more skilled manpower by strengthening our technical training centers.

An important feature of next year's budget is to pay special attention to the deprived areas. The fund for these areas was multiplied by several times. Special attention will be paid to the reconstruction of war-damaged areas. Frankly, the people in the war-damaged areas suffered a great deal during the war. A positive step was taken last year and more than 20 billion tumans were spent. Next year we plan to spend over 30 billion tumans, and will increase that sum further if they can absorb it. Telecommunication has priority. This is the best and cheapest means of maintaining contact. High importance will also be attached to the postal services. Important key industries, such as the Mobarakeh steel mill, the petrochemical industries and refineries, sugar

cane production in Khuzestan, lumber and paper manufacturing and cement production have priority because of society's acute needs in reconstruction.

With regard to the processing industries, a large portion of agricultural goods are left unsold by the farmers and either rot or are sold at low prices and fall into the hands of middlemen.

The processing, food, and rural industries, fisheries and forestry have been given priority. The [Construction] Jihad has taken steps to follow-up what the Agricultural Ministry has done. This year those industries will be given more attention.

On the whole, the reconstruction program, which has been put forward as one of the important aims in this decade, should be stepped-up in 1370, because in 1369 we were able to pave the way for overcoming some of the difficulties.

Another of our top priorities in 1370 is to harness the country's waters, particularly those flowing out of the country, in addition to increasing the capacity of power stations to supply energy, since there is presently a shortage in terms of industry and consumption.

Other priorities include: Urban transportation. Our people presently have great difficulty in travelling. We have purchased a considerable number of buses which will be imported next year. Large numbers are under construction and are being delivered now;
Reforming urban transportation and particularly stepping-up construction of metros in order to help the environment, because in large cities such as Tehran, the people are suffering from the effects of pollution;
Creating healthy leisure activities for our young people. They were neglected throughout the revolution period because of the war and other problems. This should should be given more consideration.

The overall outcome of these plans is that employment is created for youths who seek employment. Unfortunately, although we have a work force, we are short of skilled manpower. I ask the young people to learn a skill. Because of this construction movement in the country we definitely need a work force. Unskilled laborers may be easily found, but skilled work definitely needs training.

One of our hopes is that, God willing, it will be possible for our nation to go on the pilgrimage and to the holy places in Karbala', al-Najaf, and Samarra. Preliminary steps have been taken for this purpose and there have been agreements in principle. We hope we will not be deprived of this divine blessing in the coming year. We see some signs of divine mercy, indicating that we can be more hopeful toward the future, particularly these days when we have both the spring of nature and the spring of worship.

In the auspicious month of Ramadan we humbly ask God to make us worthy of his blessings and give us his unstinting kindness. We see signs of God's kindness, particularly since in the latter part of last year the shortage of rainfall, which was a cause for concern, was compensated thanks to God's blessings. We see a good year ahead of us. God willing we will be able to perform our duties well.

Peace and God's mercy be upon you.

Emami-Kashani Sermon Censures Iraqi Regime Acts

LD2203122791 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] On the first Friday of the new year, which coincides with the first Friday in the holy month of Ramadan, our Muslim and fasting compatriots today performed the politico-religious rites of Friday prayers all over the country.

Residents of Tehran celebrated this Muslim tradition at Tehran University and the adjacent streets, with Ayatollah Emami-Kashani leading the prayers.

In his second sermon, the acting Friday prayers leader of Tehran expressed deep sorrow for the recent events in Iraq, especially the crimes committed by the Iraqi regime against that country's oppressed Muslims. He also expressed strong concern over the Iraqi regime's acts, including the desecration of the holy shrines of the immaculate imams, peace be upon them, insulting the seminaries in Iraq, and dishonorable behavior toward His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Khu'i.

He then said: Imam Khomeyni, may he be admitted to God's paradise, while addressing Saddam's protectors repeatedly said that they should not be afraid of us because Islam is a faith acting on the basis of logic and reasoning, not one based on resorting to force. Do not protect Saddam and the Ba'th Party so much and do not arm him because one day he will set the region on fire.

And yet, they protected Saddam; they equipped him. And now the world realizes well how right our dear late imam was.

Ayatollah Emami-Kashani added: Today the peoples of the world see clearly the righteousness of the neutral position adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Persian Gulf crisis, which was declared by the leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khameni'i. Those people who were impressed by Saddam's limited missile attacks against Israel now realize that Saddam's hatred for the honorable shrines of His Holiness 'Ali, peace be on him, is stronger than [his hatred] for Israel.

Referring to the miserable stand adopted by the Iraqi regime against the United States and the multinational forces, the acting Tehran Friday prayers leader said: The Iraqi regime, which adopted such a humble and miserable stand against the United States and its allies, has now taken to massacring the victimized Muslims of Iraq. He is insulting the seminaries and the sacred ground

[held by] His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Khu'i. He has taken His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Khu'i—despite his old age—by force from his home to Baghdad. He is doing this in an effort to deceive the people.

Neither the world nor the Muslim people of Iraq will ever be fooled by the Iraqi regime. That regime must know that because of the insults it has committed against holy al-Najaf and Karbala', as well as against the seminaries, he has united the world of Islam against himself. The Muslim and oppressed people of Iraq, meanwhile, are not afraid of the crimes being committed by the regime ruling over that country.

In his second sermon, Ayatollah Emami-Kashani expressed appreciation for the government's political and economic moves, especially during the past year. He stressed that the people and the government must maximize coordination between themselves. He called for solidarity and unity in order to remove the difficulties.

The acting Tehran Friday prayers leader, in his first sermon, spoke extensively about the great blessings of the holy month of Ramadan, calling on our Muslim fasting fellow countrymen to avail themselves as far as possible of the blessings of this holy month.

Concern Expressed Over Safety of Ayatollah Al-Khu'i

Khamene'i Warns Iraqi Government

LD2103122691 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Dear listeners: On the issue of dishonor toward the al-Najaf 'ulema, especially His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Khu'i, by the Iraq regime, Ayatollah Khamene'i's office has issued a statement today. We draw your attention to the statement, which we have just received:

We inform the noble Iranian nation that following the bloody and catastrophic events of the recent days in Iraq, and the Ba'thist regime's audacity in dishonoring the holy sites, killing people, and destroying cities and rural areas through bombing and other means, it has recently been reported that the mercenary regime in another audacious act has transferred His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Haj Sayyid Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i—who is one the great Islamic sources of emulation and the constant pillar of the al-Najaf seminary—under duress, and committed affrontery against his eminence.

Also recently, criminal orders have been issued to Ba'thist agents for the attempted assassination of the 'ulema and the scholars in al-Najaf. Those reports, which indicate the height of waywardness and shamelessness of that regime's agents, have caused great distress and concern. His Eminence [Khamene'i] has asked the officials concerned to undertake the necessary investigation with regard to those events, and obtain accurate and correct news.

Meanwhile, those events, which all indicate the depth of Iraqi regime's enmity toward Islam, Islamic sanctities, and Muslims' feelings, are the cause of anger and revulsion of the Muslim nation toward the Iraqi regime and its ringleaders. Moreover, considering the old age and the illness of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Khu'i, we hereby warn the Iraqi Government regarding his physical safety. May God turn the evil of the enemies of Islam onto themselves, and bestow victory on the Muslim nation of Iraq.
[Dated] 1 Farvardin 1370 [21 March]
[Signed] The office of the esteemed leader

Ahmad Khomeyni Cites Ba'thist 'Crimes'

LD2103095491 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] A group of the pilgrims to the immaculate shrine of His Eminence Imam Khomeyni—may he be admitted to God's paradise—met with Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni on Wednesday evening.

In that meeting the honorable son of the imam offered congratulations and felicitations on the arrival of the auspicious month of Ramadan and the approaching new year to the noble nation of Iran. He expressed the hope that the new year would be a year of reconstruction, happiness, and movement toward further unity and toward the country's independence and self-sufficiency.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni stressed: The fire caused by the mischief of America and its allies is still alight in the region. So is the crime of Saddam's forces in killing the defenseless people of Iraq.

Elaborating on the Ba'thists' crimes pertaining to oppression, aggression, and incursion against the Iraqi nation, he said: Any free and conscious person would tremble in hearing the horrifying news of the Iraqi regime's confrontation against the Muslim nation of that country, and would condemn those beastly actions along with the power-crazy regime that is ruling over Iraq. We hope that the noble nation of Iraq will attain its independence, freedom, and sovereignty in various arenas as soon as possible.

Regrets Aflaqites' Behavior

LD2103174991 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] With regard to the worrying news concerning the arrest of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Khu'i, and his humiliation, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Haj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni has sent a cable to Grand Ayatollah Haj Sayyid Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i. He expressed his disappointment and regret over the audacious and insulting behavior of the Aflaqites [followers of Michel Aflaq, founder of the Ba'th movement] toward his sanctity, and offered his condolences to the family of the recent martyrs of Iraq. He asked them to uphold their steadfastness in order to achieve their rights.

Golpayegani Condemns Detention

LD2103211591 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Following the detention and transfer of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah al-Khu'i, the great source of emulation of Shiites, and a number of 'ulemas of the city of al-Najaf to Baghdad, His Eminance Grand Ayatollah Golpayegani has issued a statement terming this action as an insult to the high office of emulation, the clergy and the blessed al-Najaf seminary school. He severely condemned that act.

Ayatollah On 'Silence' Over Iraqi 'Genocide'

NC2203142391 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1120 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Friday sermon by Ayatollah Imam Kashani—recorded]

[Excerpt] Muslims everywhere: Today, our Islamic world is facing regrettable events that are taking place in (?honorable) Iraq, where the killer regime that is dominating the fate of the people there is carrying out genocide against the defenseless people. The regime is also desecrating the holy sites in holy al-Najaf and Karbala' and attacking scientific and religious institutions and Muslim 'ulema and seminaries, especially His Eminence Grand Ayotallah Sayyid al-Khu'i, may his blessings continue.

We extend solace to the imam (may God expedite his deliverance), the Islamic world, and the sensible Iraqi masses on this great affliction. We also hail the souls of the righteous martyrs who have fallen in defense of their sanctities.

It is not the first time the ruling regime in Baghdad has committed such ugly crimes. The history of this regime is rife with crimes, its [word indistinct] 'ulema, especially the late Grand Ayotallah Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim [words indistinct] like the great martyr Ayotallah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his oppressed sister.

That was the convoy of the righteous 'ulema, which is still facing various kinds of injustice, killing, imprisonment, and torture. All this is evidence of the enmity harbored by the Ba'th rulers toward Islam and its 'ulema and faithful masses.

The rulers of Iraq, who have knelt in humiliation before the will of U.S. arrogance, have gained only humiliation and disgrace in the last few months as a result of their actions. Moreover, they have not refrained today from committing any crime against their helpless people. These inhuman actions have revealed the true colors of the Ba'th Party in Iraq and unmasked the (?ugly) face of the leaders of this party. Those who were supporting the Iraqi regime in the past in order to undermine the Islamic Republic have today realized the soundness of Iran's stands on the Persian Gulf war.

It has become clear to everyone that the tyrant of Iraq does not differ much from the arrogant tyrants in America and the entity that occupies Jerusalem, except in terms of strength and weakness.

We convey glad tidings to the great Iraqi people and their righteous 'ulema, especially His Eminence Grand Ayotallah Sayyid al-Khu'i, and tell them of an imminent good that God will bestow upon all Muslims. Dawn is imminent. You are under the mercy of Almighty God. Humiliation, disgrace, and hell to the tyrannic rulers of Iraq.

For thy lord is, as a guardian, on a watch-tower. [Koranic verse]

It is strange that informaton media and the United Nations and the Security Council should keep silent over the genocidal war committed by the rulers of Iraq against their people, when only recently they reacted to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait with all the might they could muster. The United Nations is called upon as stipulated by international law to condemn these ugly crimes by taking all the necessary measures to put an end to the series of crimes being perpetrated by the Iraqi regime against the people by punishing it for violating the most basic human rights.

Muslims: We are living the first days of Ramadan—the month of worship, repentance, and performance of religious duties. Our paramount duty now is to defend Muslims everywhere, especially the beleaguered Iraqi people. I urge you to fear God and refrain from His taboos.

Verily, man is in loss, except those that have faith and do righteous deeds and join together in the mutual teaching of truth, of patience and constancy. [passage omitted]

Foreign Presence in Region 'Threat to Iraq'

NC2203114391 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 12 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Alien Forces in Iraq Present Only a Menace"]

[Text] President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani yesterday voiced concern over the massacre of the Iraqi people and said that the domestic upheavals in Iraq could be catastrophic. He went also on to express hope that the uprising will culminate in the Iraqi people's sovereignty and in the interests of Islam and Muslims.

Reports arriving here on the alarming situation inside Iraq indicate that the ruling Ba'thists are losing their ground and a great popular revolution is in the making. Suppression and the massacre of Iraqi revolutionary people by the Iraqi army, especially the elite Republican Guards, can only backfire and eliminates the possiblity of the present regime remaining in power. In addition, it can only further darken the file of cruelty of the ruling Ba'th Party.

What continues to cause concern now is the presence of alien forces remaining in Iraqi border areas, which could be considered a threat to the Iraqi people and their demands. Furthermore, the continued presence of these forces could also pose a threat to the future system of government desired by the Iraqi people.

It is certain that recent changes in Iraq and defeat of the central government has undoubtedly eliminated any danger of further Iraqi aggresson against its neighbors. Now that Iraq has pulled out of Kuwait, the deployment of troops on the Iraqi borders cannot be justified and certainly is against international rules and regulations as well as Security Council resolutions, which were held as pretext to attack Iraq. The presence of foreign forces is nothing but a menace and a means to pressure weak regional states to protect the West's interests.

The largest extent of these forces in the region also brings speculations of pending geographical changes in the area, especially when one considers the deteriorating and destabilizing situation in Iraq and in some other countries in the region.

In short, it must be asserted that as long as foreign forces maintain their presence, there will be no peace and tranquility in the region.

We wish that the Iraqi people may achieve their legitimate and preliminary goals that is determining their desired system of future government and fate. The international community and the United Nations, meanwhile, are expected to start exerting pressure on the countries whose forces have been deployed unnecessarily in the Persian Gulf and put an end to their deployment. It is only in that case that regional countries, through mutual co-operation, can create a stable and appropriate order in the region.

Paper Lists National Interests Regarding Iraq

NC2103173791 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 13 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "The Unrest in Iraq"]

[Text] The Ba'thist Iraqi regime in Iraq has made at least three strategic blunders over the past decade which has placed it on the verge of collapse. They are the Iraqi invasion of the Islamic Republic of Iran (in 1980), its invasion and occupation of Kuwait (August 1990), and its failure to forecast an early defeat in the war with the U.S.-led coalition which resulted in the loss and devastation of huge human and material resources of the region.

Now again the choice is the Baghdad regime's. The people of Iraq want a popular government committed to restoring peace, security and freedom. And the ruling regime in Iraq can decide between 'suppression' and 'submission.' By suppressing the people's uprising it may be able to hold up a change in the ruling administration but the right option is for Saddam Husayn to surrender to the will of his people.

In the latter case, a transition of power can take place without bloodshed and its advantage is that since the Iraqi nation would have to choose, the ruling Ba'thist regime too would have a chance, though scant, to survive! Right now the likelihood of negotiations between revolutionary groups and the ruling regime cannot be predicted!? But it is a high probability that a change of regime in Iraq is inevitable. Baghdad should consider this point and be sure that when victory is ruled out, one should try to avoid defeat!

Overlooking the will of the people can lead the Iraqi government to committing another strategic blunder which at the same time could expose the country to constant unrest, the greed of certain expansionist neighbors, and its being swallowed by the U.S. and the West.

Although there are rumors on Iraq's disintegration, but under the present conditions it is not likely. [sentence as published] The West would not favor an Iraqi disintegration now as it would need the Ba'th Party to suppress the so-called fundamentalism. The internal groups fighting the ruling regime mostly have no intention to divide the country and basically see no need for doing so.

The current uprising has no reliance on ethnic tendencies. Drawing a distinction between the role of the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds is a futile attempt. The opposition is an all-out popular one not even inspired and strengthened by the combatant Iraqi groups which have been fighting the Ba'thist regime for long years. The uprising is a consequnece of the peak of national inferiority, extreme hatred toward the Ba'thist rule, homelessness and war, the ambiguity and gloom of the future, and eventually the great weakness of the Ba'thist regime as a result of war. Reports reaching here from inside Iraq indicate that the uprising enjoys the least organization and there is still no united leadership.

At present, the intervention of any foreign force in the uprising of the Iraqi people is out of question. If the uprising had not become public and instead small-scale resistance groups had been organized it would have been possible for a foreign power to interfere in the wake of the Iraqi regime's weakening.

As for Iraq's internal affairs, our national interests and stragegy require some observations:

—To take measures to stop further destruction and bloodshed in Iraq and to persuade the Iraqi regime to adopt a realistic approach to the ongoing uprising of people instead of suppressing them.
—To place emphasis on the preservation of Iraq's territorial integrity.
—To support the public uprising in Iraq and to insist that the Iraqi people's denied rights be vindicated and they be provided with freedom and national security.
—To make efforts for an immediate withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq.

—To prevent and confront any attempts that might be made by foreign powers to determine the fate and future of the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi regime's use of tanks and planes in suppressing the uprising is a proof of the non-interference of any foreign forces in that country. One's desires should not be mistaken for his actions. There are many countries seeking goals of expanding their national interests but not all of them are able to materialize their aims.

To this end, the Ba'thist regime should show adequate wisdom in analyzing the current situation. Otherwise any rash analysis about Iraq's status quo by either foreign powers, the regimes of the region or the Iraqi Ba'thist regime would only lead to further deviation.

Comment on Lessons From Baghdad's 'Near Collapse'

NC2103173291 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 14 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Lessons to Learn"]

[Excerpts] Up until the near collapse of the Baghdad regime on March 2 through its acceptance of the U.N.—or to be more specific the U.S.—terms for a ceasefire, Iraq was by most standards a successful country. It had almost everything that a state of its size and resources could ask for. This success could generally be attributed to two factors: Its strong leadership and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Up until the collapse of law and order in Iraq, the country had among other thing[s] the second most powerful armed forces in the region (after Israel) and one that all the other countries of the region had to reckon with. Even Israel had begun to express fears about the size and power of the Iraqi military.

On the diplomatic front Iraq also enjoyed an unprecedented recognition. If an Iraqi envoy attending an international forum decided to talk, others would listen and in most cases approved of Baghdad's proposition. Iraq also enjoyed a good economic standing because of access to credits provided by the Gulf Arab shaykhdoms and Western countries. One can go on listing Iraq's good ratings in other sectors. Iraq owed the big chunk of its then distinguished status to the fear of the unknown that Arabs as well as Western countries harbored in their minds about the Islamic Revolution. [passage omitted]

Chances are Iraq will never attain its prewar status because of all the unlimited assistance it got in the form of diplomatic, economic and military support is gone. [sentence as published] Even if the Persian Gulf shaykhdoms were to decide to help Iraq, they won't be able to do so since they are themselves in deep trouble. The Western countries won't help either because back then they created Iraq as a hurdle against Iran.

Saddam provides an exemplary model from which one can learn something and conclusions can be drawn. One conclusion is that dictatorial regimes should disentangle themselves from the bodies of Third World countries. [passage omitted]

The communication and information society of today needs the participation and contribution of everyone to register progress. The survival of the developing countries will depend on how well they complete the transition from dictatorial regimes to pluralistic political systems in which everyone can have a say in what happens to society.

If Saddam had not eradicated all opposition and expressions of dissent, somebody would have told him that the path that he chose to realize increased glory was wrong and Iraq would not be in the shape that it is today.

Editorial Urges Iraqi Opposition Vigilance

NC2203122391 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 16 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Strugglers Should Keep Their Eyes Open in Iraq"]

[Text] The current situation in Iraq is alarming and it looks as if more plots against the people of that country are in store from both certain regional countries and also from the West.

The Iraqi regime, however, is still embarking on blunder after blunder. The rulers in Iraq are using all means to suppress the popular uprising in that country.

Temporary Friday Prayer Leader Ayatollah Abdolkarim Musavi-Ardabili was right when he yesterday underlined the conspiracy of certain countries including the United States who are trying to install a puppet regime in Baghdad which can serve their interests and purposes in the region.

The majority of the Iraqi nation has been deprived of their basic rights for at least 22 years during the Ba'thist regime. The majority of the Iraqi nation had been the victim of the dictatorial regime in Baghdad which left a legacy of nothing but prison, torture, massacre and lately, a humiliated defeat which of course will go down in history with the name of the Ba'thists and especially Saddam.

The post-war situation in Iraq and the opponents of the Ba'thist regime inside and outside of Iraq is very complicated. The opponents are very determined and many. During the last 22 years, they were forced to align themselves with this or that country or ideology.

But the recent conference of the Ba'thist opponents in Beirut gives us a ray of hope. On Thursday, they all declared that they had buried their differences and vowed that with a single voice they will continue their struggle until the final victory...which is nothing more than a popular government in Iraq.

The declaration of unity by the opponents of the Iraqi regime has also definitely reduced the danger of a division of Iraq.

Despite all the expectations from opponents, one should not forget that the imperialist forces and their agents will never allow a strong and united Iraq.

At this critical juncture, all the opposition groups of Iraq should remember the imperialist plots which always use the weapon of discord. These opposition groups should keep their eyes open.

We are sure that if the opposition is really united, then no hurdle and no plot can stop the popular uprising in Iraq and by doing so, all the Iraqis will be opening a new chapter in their country's history where all people will receive their due rights.

Baker Mideast Tour, U.S. Policy Viewed

NC2203120991 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 13 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Long Gap Between Words and Action on Mideast Issues"]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker is visiting the Middle East nowadays. Reports coming in indicate that so far he has failed to find any definite solution to the Palestinian problem.

Pending the 7-month-long Kuwaiti crisis, Baker refused to visit the occupying Zionist state frightened that his visit may arouse Muslim public opinion and whip up emotional outbursts.

Baker's Israel visit took place as his French counterpart in an interview with the Paris-based daily LE MONDE said that the international community has just six months time to hammer out a real settlement to the Arab-Israeli disputes.

Baker's present Middle East tour is of great importance from two aspects for the White House. First, is that Israel went along with the U.S. request not to retaliate against the missile strikes by Baghdad during the Persian Gulf war. Now, the U.S. has to say thank you and sympathize with the usurper leaders and send a top-level official there.

Second, Iraq did its utmost during the Persian Gulf crisis, to somehow link its occupation of Kuwait with that of the Palestinian issue. To foil the Iraqi political gesture, Americans promised a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem after liberating Kuwait and the White House is now taking up its promise by initiating the ongoing diplomatic moves.

But political observers have considered Baker's Middle East tour with suspicion. It should not be forgotten that at the time of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, Americans were most persistently keen on the implementation of Security Council resolutions which are binding on all members of the world body.

Now, that the Kuwaiti crisis has been tackled in a way favorable to the U.S. Administration, there is no word at all of the earlier U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 which explicitly calls for the withdrawal of all Zionist forces from the territories occupied in January 1967. These resolutions it should be observed were adopted over 20 years ago.

Moreover, the White House leaders are once again repeating their ambiguous earlier statements so that with the passage of time the situation will lapse back again to what it was before the Persian Gulf crisis period.

Though Bush's recent statements promising to solve the Arab-Israeli conflicts has been welcomed in some political circles, it must not be forgotten that these statements are nothing new and former U.S. presidents had also made such promises. There is a long gap yet between words and action, promises and their fulfillment.

KEYHAN HAVAI on U.S. Attitude Toward Iraq

PM2003235091 Tehran KEYHAN HAVAI in Persian 13 Mar 91 p 1

[Editorial: "Washington's Scenarios for Iraq's Future"]

[Text] In their analysis of possibilities for the future of Iraq by the Western media, the void left by U.S. views on this important subject is quite obvious. Within the framework of U.S. moves to create a regional security plan, at the gathering of the (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council, Syria and Egypt are mentioned; it is obvious to analysts that this arrangement will not be enough to safeguard Washington's interests in the region in the face of fundamental changes that have taken place. The addition of Damascus to the list of followers of the White House will not change anything in the balance of the Middle East, except for perhaps the issue of Palestine. Therefore Washington's comprehensive program for the area will never be complete without paying some attention to Baghdad. Popular movements in Iraq, in order to prevent their just cause from becoming part of a bargain, must on the one hand pay attention to the shaping of future relations between Washington and Baghdad, and on the other, see how far the West sees it necessary to change the political leadership in Iraq.

Washington can use the "openness" of the Iraqi peoples' opposition to their regime in two ways. To link the people's widespread opposition to Saddam with Iran could clarify the first possibility which could keep the present regime, with its opposition to the Islamic revolution, intact. If this occurs, the likelihood of any changes in Baghdad in the future remains weak. The other possibility is to drag Saddam to a position where he would perform his last mission to pave the way for the West to control this region.

As was mentioned, following any changes to the political makeup in Baghdad, the Islamic movement in that country must figure prominently in any calculations. Keeping in mind Iran's anti-American sentiments, this will not be tolerable for the West.

Therefore, keeping in mind the West's exact knowledge of the depth of the influence by the Islamic movement in Iraq, there is the likelihood that before Saddam's departure there may be widespread killing of the most important elements of the Islamic movement with guidance from the United States. Of course this plot could only succeed if all the mentioned forces come out into the open. The calculated moves of the United States in Iraq and the signs that exist indicate that Washington likes this scenario.

The complex and sensitive conditions at present in Iraq, more than anything else, need deep and careful attention to all the moves and programs made by the enemies of the Islamic world. It does not seem that an all-out analysis of this has been made at present.

Prospects for Improved UK Ties, Cooper Release

NC2203121091 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 14 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Irani-British Relations on the Road of Improvement"]

[Text] Two reports have been released within a very short period of time. One was that Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati talked on phone with his British counterpart, Douglas Hurd, and the second was the announcement of the imminent release of Iranian student, Mehrdad Kowkabi, from jail in Britain.

It was explained that Kowkabi cannot be prosecuted under British law, because of a lack of evidence and absence of any witnesses. Therefore the charges levelled against him could not be proved.

Such an explanation, provided by the court judge, suggested a more diplomatic language rather than a legal one.

Although the Persian Gulf crisis was expected to bring some changes in the relations between the two countries, on the whole the two developments indicate a thaw in relations between Tehran and London.

It would seem certain now that London, after releasing Kowkabi, would expect Tehran, in return, to free the British spy Roger Cooper, who is imprisoned in Iran and help to use its influence to pave the way for the release of British hostages held in Lebanon.

Political observers in Tehran have not ruled out one of the above two cases but argue that it is very difficult for Tehran to take steps on both cases.

It is obvious that impediments in the way of improved relations between Tehran and London cannot be tackled overnight and, in order to remove the obstacles between the two sides more goodwill is needed.

If we are convinced with British Premier John Major's, recent remarks calling for an active British role in Europe, it would mean that though London has fully complied with U.S. demands during the Persian Gulf crisis, it now seemingly is altering its stance.

In order to play its role in Europe, London cannot stay behind other European capitals, which enjoy "specific relations" with Tehran, having established close ties with the government.

In return to the moves from Britain, Iran most probably will respond positively and make a return gesture, which some political observers suggest could lead to the release of Roger Cooper within a week.

Maldives

President Accepts Resignation of Trade Minister

BK2103105691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1045 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Colombo, March 21 (AFP)—Minister of Trade and Industries Ahmed Mujuthaba resigned Tuesday from his cabinet post and from two other top government positions in the Indian Ocean atoll nation of Maldives, Maldivian officials said Thursday. The Maldives High Commission here said in a statement that he resigned after expressing his wish to vacate his public offices on receiving the government pension given to public servants who complete 20 years service.

It said Mr. Mujuthaba also resigned from the posts of managing director of the State Trading Organisation (STO) and director of the Maldives Ship Management (MSM). The statement said Mr. Mujuthaba's resignation was accepted by President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, who thanked him and paid special tribute to his long and dedicated service to the country.

Mr. Mujuthaba, who previously held the portfolios of transport and shipping and tourism, trade and industries minister in may after his predecessor Ilyas Ibrahim fled the country amid a corruption scandal. Mr. Ibrahim, who was stripped of both his ministerial post and that of STO managing director after he fled the Maldives, was allowed to return home in August.

Mr. Mujuthaba figured in the international media when he was taken hostage by Sri Lankan Tamil mercenaries when they made an attempt to overthrow Mr. Gayoom's government in November 1988. The coup bid financed by Maldivian dissidents was crushed with assistance from Indian troops who rescued a seriously wounded Mr. Mujuthaba from the mercenary boat that was trying to escape with several hostages.

Pakistan

Sharif Condemns Indian 'Atrocities' in Kashmir

BK2103122691 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpts] The prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, has announced an accord reached between the four provinces on the apportionment of Indus water. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today at the end of the meeting of Council of Common Interests, the prime minister described the accord as the most important in the history of the nation. [passage omitted]

Answering a question about atrocities being committed by Indian forces in occupied Kashmir, the prime minister said Pakistan not only condemns such atrocities, but also invited the world's attention to this problem. He reminded those nations who are champions of human rights to pay their attention to the miseries of the people of occupied Kashmir.

Ishaq Khan, Sharif Congratulate Khaleda Zia

BK2103163091 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] The president and the prime minister have congratulated Begum Khaleda Zia on her assumption to the office of the prime minister of Bangladesh. In a message to the new premier, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan expressed the confidence that their cooperation and collaboration in various fields will continue to expand in the interests of regional peace and development.

In his message, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said the joint efforts by Pakistan and Bangladesh will help establish peace and stability in this troubled region. He said Pakistan is proud of its partnership with Bangladesh in SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] which draws its strength from the foresight of her late husband, President Ziaur Rahman.

DPRK To Help Set Up Underground Rail System

BK2103053491 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Democratic People's Republic of Korea [DPRK] will provide every possible assistance in establishing an underground rail sustem in Pakistan. This was stated by DPRK ambassador Mr. Choe Su-il during his talks with the federal railway minister, Mir Hazar Khan Bijrani, in Islamabad yesterday. The ambassador apprised the federal minister of his country's railway system and stressed the need for setting up a joint commission to increase bilateral cooperation.

Mir Hazar Khan Bijrani welcomed the proposal and assured the ambassador of Pakistan's full cooperation in this regard. He also apprised the ambassador of the government's policy of self reliance.

IJI Candidate Reelected Senate Chairman

BK2103162791 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Wasim Sajjad of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad [IJI] has been reelected as chairman of the Senate with an overwhelming majority. Out of a total of 87 votes, 78 votes were cast during the balloting in the Senate this afternoon out of which 70 votes were secured by Wasim Sajjad. His rival, Syed Abdullah Shah of the People's Democratic Alliance [PDA], secured seven votes, while one vote was rejected. Abdul Qayyum Khan, who chaired the house, took the oath from Wasim Sajjad after reelection to the post for a second term.

Dr. Nurjahan Panezai, also from the IJI, was elected deputy chairman of the Senate with a massive majority. A total of 75 votes were cast for the position of the deputy chairman out of which she secured 66 votes. Her rival Hafiz Hussain Ahmed of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam, Fazlur Rahman Group, got nine votes. Later, Dr. Nurjahan Panezai was sworn in by the Senate chairman. [passage omitted]

Activists Stop Publication of Two Newspapers

BK2103150491 Hong Kong AFP in English 1438 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Karachi, March 21 (AFP)—Threats by armed activists against the distribution of newspapers carrying stories critical of an organization representing Urdu-speaking settlers here, prevented publication of two evening newspapers Thursday.

The English-language "STAR" and Gujarati-language "WATAN" newspapers could not be printed Thursday as vendors had refused to handle them following violent threats from activists of the Karachi-based Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM). This followed Sunday's attack on local journalist Zafar Abbas, who wrote reports on the MQM that the organization's leadership accused of being biased. MQM leader Altaf Hussain had called for a boycott of all newspapers publishing critical stories about the MQM.

Armed gangs have also halted distribution of "DAWN," the main newspaper of Herald Publications, which also publishes "STAR" and "WATAN." "DAWN" had openly accused the MQM of complicity in the attack on Zafar Abbas. Mr. Hussain denied the charge but also demanded the resignation of the governor of Sindh Province, Mahmood A. Haroon, whose family controls Herald Publications.

Activists have also threatened to prevent distribution of the Urdu-language newspaper "JASARAT," considered the mouthpiece of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami Party, which Mr. Hussain accuses of conspiring against the MQM.

Pakistani newspaper editors will hold a meeting here Thursday to consider the situation and agree on a future course.

NWFP Station of Radio Pakistan Inaugurated

BK2103162291 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Radio Pakistan's Abbottabad station started regular broadcasting from this afternoon. The director general of Radio Pakistan inaugurated the station's transmission which can be heard on 1609 khz. It is the third radio station established in the North-West Frontier Province [NWFP].

Sri Lanka

Army Claims 300 Tamil Fighters Killed in Mannar

BK2203113491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0950 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Colombo, March 22 (AFP)—The military said Friday it killed at least 300 Tamil Tiger guerrillas and wounded many more in three days of fierce battles in Sri Lanka's curfew-bound northwest Mannar District. "The latest report we have from the front is that we have killed at least 300 LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) men. This is a conservative estimate," a military spokesman here said. Tamil sources put the security forces losses at 18 dead and nearly 50 wounded. LTTE losses were high because the guerrillas used untrained teenagers in the attack on two army camps in Mannar, the sources said.

Sporadic fighting continued Friday around the two camps but government troops were in control, a military spokesman here said earlier.

LTTE guerrillas had made a third attempt to seize the Silavathurai and Kokkupadayan Camps late Thursday but security forces backed by the Air Force smashed the rebel offensive, he said. "They tried their stunt again last night. And they got back in good measure. We are in control of the situation now. Everytime they tried to advance, we hit back severely," he said. "There has been sporadic fire from both sides since dawn." He added that military operations continued Friday in Mannar and neighbouring Kilinochchi District which was also under curfew.

The Tigers, who overran at least five key Army camps in northern Sri Lanka after renewing their separatist war in June, launched simultaneous attacks from late Tuesday on the two strategic camps in Mannar. The rebels again attempted to storm the camps on Wednesday but the attack was repulsed by security forces who fired mortars and small arms besides receiving air support. Elsewhere, troops killed two rebels in northeast Trincomalee District and two more near the northern Elephant Pass Army Camp.

Nearly 6,000 people have died in fighting in the Tamil-dominated northeast since June when the LTTE ended 14 months of peace talks with Colombo and stepped up its campaign for an independent Tamil state.

'Record' Income From Garment Exports Last Year

BK2203113691 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The income from the export of garment from Sri Lanka reached a record figure of 25 billion rupees last year. The garment industry employees account for the largest number of people than in any other industrial subsector in Sri Lanka. Some 600 exporting companies are now in operation. This was stated by the minister of handlooms and textile industries, U.B. Wijekoon, at a seminar on shaping the clothing industry for survival and success in Colombo on Wednesday [20 March].

In his address, Minister Wijekoon said that 85 provincial garment factories have been set up with an employment potential of more than 15,000 persons. He added that under the government's regional policy, companies establishing production unit in remote areas will be given favorable consideration in the grant of quota.